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To the heart of matter

Brian Pippard

ABRAHAM PAIS *Subtle is the Lord... The Science and the Life of Albert Einstein* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, £15.00/\$39.95)

Abraham Pais has written the definitive life of Einstein, based on a thorough study of all available published and unpublished papers, letters, and other records. A distinguished theoretical physicist himself, Pais fully understands Einstein's published works, representing their logical structure. Moreover, he traces in detail the growth of the ideas - the false trails and the errors of reasoning, the response to criticism and discussion - so that we can experience, in however attenuated form, the perplexities and excitement of an outstanding creative thinker. This is not to imply, of course, that others need not extend the study in matters of detail, but from now on the starting-point for every student of Einstein will be Pais's book.

Einstein was a household name in his own time, first as an example of all that is brilliant and incomprehensible, and later as the gentle humanist who left his study on occasion to offer advice to the powerful and wisdom to a troubled world. How far was this reputation justified? Part of the answer is to be found in Pais's sub-title, 'The Science and the Life of Albert Einstein'. Einstein was a scientist first and last, a theoretical physicist who occupies a special place in the thoughts of all physicists. He, far more than any other single person, is responsible for the way we think nowadays about material things, in the pantheon of physicists he stands beside Newton and Maxwell; the admiration of the world, however superficial in origin, is no more than his due.

Pais writes that "Einstein was the best man I have ever known"; he emerged into politics when he wished, and retired to his thoughts again as soon as he could. He did not inflame movements, but was willing to lend his vast authority to the ambitions of others with which he sympathized - the search for peace, an honourable future for the Jewish nation (he was a Zionist, but passionately a Jew). But at the heart of it all was the search for the truth about the physical universe, the perfect fundamental structure out of which the whole of experience grows; the laws of the atom and the stars in their courses. To this he always returned, to his very last days; this was his mission in life, to which all else must be subordinate. It was a religious search for the pattern established by the Maker, when he set all things in motion to work out their destiny alone. For, like many lesser physicists, Einstein was a Deist, needing a God but not needing his personal involvement in the affairs of the Universe. And like others, including some eminent physicists, who have tried to encompass a truth in its entirety, he ended by inventing universes which do not happen to be ours. But this was after he was forty-five, and followed fifteen to twenty years of almost unparalleled creativity which had left physics totally changed.

It is not to be expected that such a man should be equally successful in all his affairs, and so reading accounts of Einstein's life and his relations with others one is struck by his goodness. 'To be sure, his married life was on the whole unsuccessful; his first wife divorced him and his second marriage was full of chafes, but he was not indifferent and blamed their failures on his own shortcomings, for the small change of everyday contacts was not compatible with the intensity of his thinking. He was a solitary man who nevertheless enjoyed congenial company and did not resent being sought out by those wishing intellectual conversation. He talked about himself with humour, and about others without malice. Rarely did courtesy forsake him in discussion, however fierce the controversy, and his assessment of himself seems to have been just, without arrogance or false modesty. I have only once heard criticism of him from any of his former colleagues and I was interested to learn from this book that their relationship had been unusually tense. From most who knew him slightly he elicited reverence rather than fear. It is pleasing to read here of his last years; the daily externalization on the piano (he could no longer play his violin), the strolls around Princeton, the talks with colleagues, and always the return to his private constructions and the arduous analysis they called forth; and finally, facing death calmly, a fulfilled life ending in peace.

Why did Einstein ever start on this long journey? At about eighteen we find him, in a school essay on his plans for the future, proposing to go to college and become a teacher of mathematics and physics. "Here are the reasons..." Above all, it is my disposition for abstract and mathematical thought, my lack of imagination (phantasy) and practical ability. "Lack of imagination? Why, yes! Einstein's mind was not divergent (or pramiscuous in Liam Hudson's gloss); he would have laughed dismally if asked to think of twenty ways of using a brick. But, like Newton and, I guess, most other great innovators, his strength lay in the power of undeviating concentration on an idea, and in the intuition for knowing which idea was worth the effort. His great imaginings were not the sparks thrown off by the clever mind, but rare feats quite beyond the range of cleverness. It is said that in his days of fame Einstein was closely questioned by a reporter about his working habits. He admitted to taking a walk in the afternoon; then, "and I suppose you take a notebook to jot down your important thoughts?" "Oh no." "Why not?" "Well, you see, I have so few important thoughts."

Most scientists never achieve a thought in this category, some few have one during their life, fewer still have two, but Einstein had three - the quantum nature of light, the Special Theory of Relativity, and the use of non-Euclidean geometry to bring gravitation into the compass of Relativity (the General Theory of Relativity). These major advances are different in kind. Both the Special and the General Theories of Relativity are extensions of the classical Newtonian view of the interplay of forces with massive bodies, which had been enriched by Maxwell's elucidation of electric and magnetic fields and the conclusion of light waves. But this extension revealed a logical inconsistency at the heart of the theory, exemplified by the result of the Michelson-Morley experiment. No matter how fast you are travelling, a light signal passes you at exactly the same speed. In the last decades of the nineteenth century ingenious attempts were made to patch up the theory; they were to work out their destiny alone. For, like many lesser physicists, Einstein was a Deist, needing a God but not needing his personal involvement in the affairs of the Universe. And like others, including some eminent physicists, who have tried to encompass a truth in its entirety, he ended by inventing universes which do not happen to be ours. But this was after he was forty-five, and followed fifteen to twenty years of almost unparalleled creativity which had left physics totally changed.

This was one of the problems that occupied his mind in the quiet of the Bern patent office, in the intervals of his exemplary performance as a technical expert third-class. In 1905 he proposed to cut the Gordian knot by assuming that the laws of nature (including the speed of light) present exactly the same form to all observers moving at a constant relative velocity. In this way he was able to develop a theory of dynamics which extended, without violating, earlier theories. It was the Special Theory of Relativity, the context of the Newtonian ideas theory we see how Newtonian ideas represent observations made on bodies moving rather slowly in comparison to light. Nothing of Newton or Maxwell is discarded - what is now known are the limits within which they may safely be used. It was out of this theory that Einstein drew the corollary that energy and mass are aspects of the same thing ($E = mc^2$). At that time, before the discovery of the nucleus, there was no significant experimental test, but nuclear physics has placed the result beyond doubt.

The dogmatic certainty of physicists concerning Special Relativity is a source of sorrow to the less sophisticated, who are unable to follow the "Two Paradoxes" from even on the way Pais has explained

Einsteins term). Even if there were no nuclear experiments to verify that it is possible to embark on a long space voyage and return less aged than the stay-at-home, the relativist would still have to reject his critics, whose principal error is to suppose that common sense still rules in the world of relativity. By common sense I do not mean that the earlier Newtonian model of the universe was one that for himself. Not in the least, Newton's achievement involved the systematic rejection of nearly all the philosophic views of earlier cosmologists, not all of whom were devoid of common sense, but what he arrived at was an intellectual system which generations of students have learnt to use (though not easily) without being asked to abandon everyday notions. By contrast, Relativity builds on this structure by asking the student who has mastered Newtonian rudiments then to accept something which his common sense rebels against, viz, that all observers see light passing at the same speed. From now on he must be careful to apply mathematical logic rather than

the story. But it is worth stressing that even when Einstein realized that the universe was not Euclidean, and that gravity was a manifestation of space curvature, he was not rejecting earlier ideas but placing them in a wider context. Newtonian physics is physics in a curved space when the curvature is too small to show, or perhaps when the manifestations of curved space can be described as extra effects (gravity) acting in a Euclidean space. Einstein's problem was to find a consistent description when the simplifying proviso is no longer valid. The imaginative effort needed to take this step was enormous, and few could discuss with him the rights and wrongs of his every attack on the citadel. This was his last and, in Pais's view, his greatest success. When he found that his equations predicted that the orbit of Mercury should slowly turn relative to the fixed stars, and that the predicted age (43 seconds of arc per century) agreed perfectly with the figure that the astronomers had already measured, "for a few days, I was beside myself with joyous excitement". This was in 1915, and was no occasion for a

quantum, or photon, was a reality (in the sense in which physicists use the word). Now Pais fleshes out Einstein's part in the story, and well worthwhile it is. The beginning lies in the middle of the last century, when Kirchhoff showed that the radiation (visible and infra-red) to be found in a hot cavity has the same quality no matter what the walls are made of - its character depends on the temperature alone. It seemed clear to Kirchhoff that a very fundamental question was to determine how the energy is distributed among a wide range of wave-lengths, and to find a theory that explains the distribution. And he was not wrong; from the attempt sprang the whole of quantum physics.

There is no space here to tell the story as it deserves, and I can only comment briefly on a few points. Planck found the formula which described the experimental results and almost immediately suggested that material oscillators could take up energy from the radiation, and give it out, in quanta - rather than continuously, as classical theory says. His argument betrays a woeful misunderstanding of statistical physics, then a new and controversial area, but his conclusion was sound, as we now know. Planck was not happy with his revolutionary stroke, for the edifice he was attacking - the classical physics of Newton and Maxwell - was as near perfect as anyone could wish, and his proposal was no mere extension, as Relativity was to be, but a blow at the foundations. It is not surprising that he made little progress, and that Einstein in 1905 took up the problem virtually untouched. What he did then is mind-boggling for, to judge from his publications, he was led by a thermodynamical argument to propose that the discreteness of quantization resided not merely in the process of radiation interacting with matter, but was a property of the radiation itself. What is so astonishing about this at first sight is the truly appalling blunders of his thermodynamics, which by a series of self-cancelling mistakes reach a correct conclusion that way; he must have seen the need for quantizing radiation, and bashed up his argument to give the semblance of a justification. It is, however, a remarkable performance for such an aristocrat of the intellect, suggesting that he was thrown off his stride by the audacity of his guess.

Later on, as Einstein came back again and again to the problem, he is in complete command and we can only hold our breaths at the sheer beauty of his treatments. But all the time he agonizes over the dilemma that Maxwell's theory of electromagnetic fields, the crowning glory of classical physics, has no place for the quantum, and the quantum is simply not the sort of entity that can be controlled by equations like Maxwell's. Planck, Einstein and later Schrödinger, each in his turn makes his contribution to quantum physics and stands back, agghast at his treachery. And amid all this stands the figure of Bohr, deeply puzzled, certain (as was Einstein) that the mathematical description of quantum phenomena was right, and attempting with the others to find a new philosophy into which both viewpoints will fit. Einstein was never convinced by Bohr's final compromise (the Copenhagen doctrine). Most modern physicists prefer to ignore the deep problems in the confidence that their prescriptions give the right answer, and the feeling that this is the point beyond which the human mind, formed from everyday experience, cannot penetrate with the sense of understanding that classical physics provides. To the leading figures in the controversy the final split between Einstein and the modernists, led by Bohr, was deeply distressing. In retrospect, it cannot be said to have held up the advance of quantum mechanics, and it has pinpointed very clearly the deep philosophical issues.

So far I have discussed only Einstein's conservative work, the rational extension, beyond what any other could have achieved, of the existing world-picture. In 1905, however, at the same time as Special Relativity, he had taken what Pais rightly calls a revolutionary step, and he was never thereafter free from anxiety about its philosophical consequences. The history of quantum physics is a joy to read, and we have already had from R. H. Stuewer (in *The Compton Effect*, 1975) a splendidly researched survey covering the period from Planck's first suggestion (1900) to Compton's experiments (1923) which convinced the majority of physicists that the light-



Einstein and his second wife photographed leaving New York for a holiday in Bermuda.

common-sense intuition to the solution of problems, until he has redeveloped his physical intuition to include relativity.

This is the step the objectors cannot take, but for those who can the rewards are immense. Henceforth every theory must be compatible with relativity, and on important occasions this has enabled rival views to be critically assessed. The most dramatic case was Dirac's demonstration in 1929, following the discovery of quantum mechanics, that the behaviour of the governing the behaviour of the electron could have only one form, and that form quite other than anything conceived before. Once the predictions of Dirac's equation had been gloriously verified it is hardly surprising that the physicist adopts relativity theory as one of his certainties, knowing that only chaos, not enlightenment, awaits any attempt to discard it. When Einstein heard in 1921 that Dayton C. Miller had obtained an experimental result that violated his theory, he was not upset; he was the last to mellow. He is "Subtle is the Lord" to explain briefly why not. I have tried to explain the experiment as being in error; but the anti-relativists cannot understand, and see only the Establishment closing its ranks.

It was, not long after Special Relativity that Einstein, who had had other fish to fry meanwhile, began searching for a way to include accelerated motions, especially acceleration under the universal force of gravity, into the theory. It is here that the going gets really rough, and I do not feel competent to comment on the way Pais has explained

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abyss / of God's capacity for woe... Forsaken He went down, and was afraid. Here there is the perception described by William Law which seems also to shadow "East Coker", and is well put by Alice Meynell's disciple Charles Williams in his essay on the Cross, that Christ, "in the last reaches of that living death to which we are exposed... substituted Himself for us". There is even the perception which seems to glimmer in "East Coker" in the novels of Williams which influenced it or in William Golding's *Darkness Visible*—that what exists beyond the darkness in ourselves which introspection finds is the passion.

On this kind of abyss Bennett touches again, and again tangentially, in the most remarkable of the essays collected in the other of his last books, *The Humane Medievalist*: that on "Nosce Teipsum" (very much enlarged in scope and matter from an earlier essay printed in *J. R. R. Tolkien: Essays in Memoriam*). The drift of this is given when he remarks that self-scepticism (the very mainspring of Shakespearean tragedy) is "the reverse of self-knowledge". Is he right? At any rate he assembles from two-and-a-half millennia a remarkable and useful range of materials with which to consider what "know thyself" means, from the most secular and prudential to the most mystical sense that to know

yourself is to know God, or alternatively that you cannot know yourself until you know God.

Bennett's own ideal, I think, comes out most clearly in the quotation from Carlyle about the monks of Bury St Edmunds which he gives in the essay "Carlyle and the Medieval Past": "Religion lies over them like an all-embracing heavenly canopy, like an atmosphere and life-element, which is not spoken of, which in all things is presupposed without speech." What he most dislikes is perhaps contained in the elaborate history of the phrase, "Climates of Opinions" (likewise much revised from an original essay in *English and Medieval Studies* presented to J. R. R. Tolkien), from Joseph Granville to the present day, when "a general climate can... be created in twenty minutes" the age in which, as he almost quotes from Ronald Knox, "Suave politeness, tempering 'bigot zeal' / Corrected 'I believe' to 'one does feel'".

Some of the essays in this collection try to buttress this sense of life: those in which Bennett returns to an old theme of his, how the later Middle Ages reconciled this universe with the transcendent, nature with the supernatural—as in "Gower's *Flower and the Leaf*", "Some Second Thoughts on the Parlement of Foules" or in the claim that *A King's Quire* for the first time

resolved the conflict between courtly love, which "gave a creature the worship that belonged to the Creator" and Christian teaching. (For the first time? One essay comments on, and on the whole attacks Henryson's *Testament of Cresseid*, and in particular Tillyard's interpretation of it, in an uncharacteristically niggling way that perhaps results from a feeling that Henryson's poem negated this resolution, or perhaps merely from feeling (that Miss Lydgate might have shared) that Tillyard had not the depth of medieval scholarship to discuss such a poem. An excellent essay, "Vernacular and the Liturgy in the English Middle Ages", ruefully contrasts the liturgy that might have emerged from the late medieval synthesis had Coverdale's version come from the Catholic side, with what has emerged from the modern chaos.

Bennett's dream of what the early Church of England might have been, and very nearly was, emerges again in the essay "Milton's Cambridge", where Scotus, Ockham and Aquinas were still read and esteemed. This is part of an admirable series of essays constituting his own history of scholarship, beginning with one of his models, the Benedictine union of physical labour, scholarship and prayer, continuing sadly through the divagations of Renaissance

scholarship, and its fall into eccentric individualism and ill health ("Lancelotti attacked him" in the case of Browning's "hero" no, his many), in the Middle Ages by Hilda, the Oxford Saxonists and Carlyle, and concluding triumphantly with a panegyric on another of his models, C. S. Lewis, the "Humane Medievalist" revealed.

A great deal of the pleasure in all this comes in digressions. Sometimes Bennett loses himself in these, and guiltily pulls himself up before he has quite made himself clear. There is a great deal of joy too in the misprints in *The Humane Medievalist*, of which there are far too many to list. (I wish Langland had shown us "the university mind disputing") About misprints in *Poetry of the Past* I feel only fear: for I have detected only two ("words of malice" as a translation of "invidiousness" must be "words of malice" and "footrest" as a translation for "patibulum" should perhaps be "torment"). Since these are both, proved by their being translations, and there is good evidence of the general difficulty of deciphering Bennett's handwriting, I am afraid that my not having noticed others may be a side-effect of the reverence in which I hold the learning of a good man and a great scholar.

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Anger rarely inclines an artist to produce his best work: it can easily become a substitute for content, a simple way of being committed. To suggest that Charles Mingus, easily the most successful of jazz musicians, occasionally fell into that trap is not to diminish his stature as either a great composer or as a bass player. "A yellow nigger", as he was called by one of his school teachers, Mingus was the son of an army sergeant who "passed" as white and who openly despised black people. Brian Priestley reveals that his subject was actually one-quarter British (his mother's father, John Phillips, came from somewhere in England). Yet Mingus brought emotional strength to his music by identifying with the plight of black Americans and by drawing upon blues and gospel music, genres that young black musicians of the 1930s, even the 1940s, had scoffed at as being too close to slavery.

Nothing could be further removed from Mingus's belligerence than the studied graciousness of Duke Ellington, yet it was Ellington who remained an artistic father-figure for Mingus throughout his life. Ellington's textures, even the kind of plunger-muted bizzarries that Tricky Sam Nanton went in for, suffused one of Mingus's most successful extended compositions, "The Black Saint and the Sinner Lady". Ellington never mixed racial or any other kind of politics with his music (the closest he came to that was in his suite, "Black, Brown and Beige"), but Mingus regularly lambasted those whom he saw as oppressors—one ironic result is that Orval Faubus, who as governor of Arkansas achieved notoriety in 1957 by refusing to admit black children to a school in Little Rock, has acquired an

immortality he might not appreciate in Mingus's "Fables of Faubus". On the other hand, not every apparently militant title was meant to be so: "They Tresspass the Land of the Sacred Sioux", apparently offering support for American Indians, turns out to have been, at least in part, a pun on the name of his fourth wife, Sue.

Mr Priestley has been handicapped by living on what is—in this context, anyway—the wrong side of the Atlantic, and has therefore been unable to track down Mingus's old school-friends or his discredited lovers: he has, however, ransacked the largely uncatalogued writings in jazz periodicals. One stroke of luck was the appearance in Britain in recent years of many of the musicians who worked for Mingus, all of them fairly eager to pass on what than experience was like. In his heyday Mingus would explain everything ("Four bars at a time", recalls the trombonist Jimmy Knepper) rather than provide the musicians with scores. On the stand, in front of an audience, he would often stop the band in full flight if the music seemed to be going askew. He even went so far as to fire musicians in the middle of a set. Not everyone relished the challenge. "Mingus was in the way so much, you couldn't play for it", says the saxophonist John Handy. "The man'd stop your solos—he was totally tyrannical." He behaved with similar arrogance to his audiences, ticking them off for clinking their glasses and berating them if they were inattentive.

Mingus was a large man, and he chose a large instrument—the double-bass. There had been remarkable bassists before him, notably Jimmy Blanton and Oscar Pettiford, but Mingus had an emotional resonance that was all his own. He played maledic solos, like Blanton and Pettiford, but he often picked the bass strings like a guitarist. It led to a virtuosic style that was taken up by, among others, Scott LaFaro and Richard Davis. Because Mingus worked at the root of the harmonic structure and was also the pivot of the rhythm section he sought to develop ways of avoiding what

bassist call "playing time", in other words just marking four beats in the bar; his phrase for his approach to the beat was "rotary perception". Priestley analyses it admirably; indeed, one of the strengths of his book is the way he dissects the music, uncovering the slightly deceptive forms that Mingus created, and more importantly—especially for those of us who are tantalized by musical echoes—identifying the different guises in which the same themes crop up, sometimes several years later (Mingus, rather ingeniously, always seemed to have been astonished that people noticed such things). There is too a discography so complete that it lists—as "unissued", of course—various concert performances in the 1960s that have only appeared on record since the book went to the printers.

Mingus died of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis in January 1979. His playing, his command of the double-bass, had already been badly affected. The stoicism of the final period seems in striking contrast to the aggressiveness of earlier years—he once broke one of Jimmy Knepper's teeth during an argument about who should orchestrate his music. But in the unabashedly romantic Mingus ludicrousness co-existed with nobility and heroism—it comes as no surprise to learn that he had an adolescent crush on Richard Strauss's *Death and Transfiguration*. Dannie Richmond, Mingus's drummer and long-time friend, recognized the contradictions: "He wanted to be like a pimp, he wanted to be a gangster, he wanted to be a musician, he wanted to be a great lover." At least some of those obsessions provided the fantasizing to be found in Mingus's autobiography, *Benach the Underdog* (the title itself is a definition of paranoia). Priestley's book acts as a corrective to it while acknowledging the truth behind some of the ranting. It provides, in fact, a kindly but unpatronizing view of an artist whose personality was sometimes confused—even by himself—with his work, yet who created some of the most original and exciting music of our time.



"The Iron Mask" (1908) from the forthcoming *Seeing Through Photography* by Michael Hiley (144pp. Gordon Fraser. £14.95, paperback £8.95, 0 86092 055 0).

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Benedicta Ward

CAROLINE WALKER BYNUM

Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages
279pp. University of California Press. £21.50.
0 520 04194 1

It is instructive to reflect upon the alterations made by contemporary interests and fads to the assessment of historical material. In the volume of essays by Caroline Walker Bynum there is a combined version of two papers she had previously presented on feminine aspects of spirituality in the Middle Ages, under the title "Jesus our Mother". In 1949, Abbé Catussi published an article in the *Revue d'Ascétique et de Mystique*, "Une Dévotion à Jésus notre mère", with a cautious recommendation that the texts he cites, "sans exagérer leur importance", deserve the notice of both theologians and historians of spirituality. Thirty-three years later, Dr Bynum comes to much the same conclusion on a wider range of texts, but it appears that her publishers sense a different climate. This essay has suggested the title of the whole book and is surely deliberately provocative in the brave new world of "women's liberation". The idea of a female God is brought to mind, coloured either with the brilliant red of crusade or the requiem black of outraged propriety. This is a touchy issue; but those who buy Dr Bynum's book for parison reasons will perhaps be disappointed. It is in no sense a work of polemic but a collection of careful and serious essays by a discriminating scholar, which gives support to feminist campaigners only by illustrating the essentially sexless nature of genuine historical scholarship.

The major studies in this book are those concerned with the spirituality of the Canons Regular in the twelfth century, a much neglected area, except for Dr Bynum's own *Docere Verbo et Exemplo: on aspects of twelfth century spirituality* (1979). The preaching concerns of the canons are again analysed here, and, by the comparing and contrasting of their life with the monastic life, a distinction between the two is suggested in a illuminating way: "what is new and distinctive about the canons as a group is not their actions or the rights they claim. It is simply the quality of their awareness, their sense of responsibility for the edification of their fellow men", a theory which sheds new light upon the place of the canons between the monks and the friars.

The second essay, "The Cistercian Conception of Community", is linked to the third; "Did the Twelfth Century Discover the Individual?". While the former essay is somewhat slight and

omits many aspects of the subject which would be needed for a complete study (for instance, the Cistercian understanding of the solitary life as a corporate solitude, and the extent to which the "guilt" Dr Bynum detects in certain writings is merely a literary technique), it provides a good introduction to the next essay. This makes a vigorous and sensible contribution to a "revolt of the medievalists" which, as the author notes, began at least fifty years ago, but was given special popularity by Colin Morris's book *The Discovery of the Individual, 1050-1200* (reprinted, 1973). "The twelfth century's new understanding of the concept of the individual has been established and explored, but it is now necessary to see that a concern with community, with groups and their differentiation from one another, is also a mark of the century. Dr Bynum provides useful evidence to illustrate this point, by stressing and calling attention to the number of texts which are about the definition and classification of groups.

The next 150 pages at first suggest that they should bear a warning, "Ladies Only". There is the essay which gives its title to the book and an equally long essay on some woman mystics of the thirteenth century, notably Gertrude of Helfta, Mechthild of Hackeborn and Mechthild of Magdeburg, a group of nuns connected with the monastery of Helfta, whose reports of their visions form the largest group of mystical writings by women in the period. "Jesus as Mother" is a sober discussion of the use of maternal imagery in the twelfth century to describe certain ideas about the relationship of Christians to God and Christ, and about religious authority in general. Beginning with the striking passage in a "Prayer to St Paul" by St Anselm of Canterbury, in which the tenderness and care for others which can be seen in Christ and His apostle is distinguished as a "maternal" kind of love, Dr Bynum passes on to the more extensive use of maternal imagery in the writings of St Bernard of Clairvaux, where a stronger emphasis on such love, as being life-giving and therefore sacrificial is apparent. The Cistercian writers who followed St Bernard, Aelred of Rievaulx, Gueric of Igny and Adam of Perseigne, continued to make use of such language, and Dr Bynum naturally concludes this list with passages from the *Revelations of Divine Love* by Julian of Norwich, well known for their precise theology and the vigour of their maternal imagery.

In the second essay in this part, Dr Bynum changes her perspective, and explores the use of "female" imagery by women rather than men. While her reflections on the information to be gained from the texts she uses about "how medieval religious people felt about themselves", are limited more by the very minor role such imagery plays in any medieval writing, some of the facts

demonstrated are both startling and suggestive. For instance, the close connection, for both men and women in this period, of maternal imagery, in its aspects of union as well as nurturing, with authority and responsibility, is particularly illuminating. Maternal nurturing, spiritual motherhood one might call it—is amply illustrated by the author's analysis of the great women of Helfta who provide instances of a strong and sensible piety, and an authority quite other than the clerical authority of men, but of equal power and perhaps providing a balance to it. This is suggestive for the present concerns in the Church with the role of women in relation to authority in things of the spirit. In this "poised, self-

Benefits of clergy

Gerard Irvine

SIMON GOODENOUGH

The Country Parson
184pp. David and Charles. £7.95.
0 7153 8238 1

"Clerus anglicanus, stupor mundi." When this phrase was coined what astonished the world in the Anglican clergy was their godliness and sound learning. These are sober and modest men, and in the word "parson" descriptive title—is to be person Christ in and to the community. Yet perhaps on the whole the English parson has been most esteemed when he has fulfilled that modest ambition; and mocked at when he has made pretensions to a nobler claim.

In fact neither godliness nor sound learning has always characterized the English parson. Lord Chesterfield reminds us, "Parsons are very like other men, and neither the better nor the worse for wearing a black gown." And as for learning, in the Middle Ages the country parson was nothing more than a peasant with just enough literacy to master the offices. The more able clerks were allocated off into religious orders and/or the royal and ecclesiastical civil services. After the Reformation things were little better, as the returns of the diocese of Gloucester show. Of the 311 parsons in the diocese 168 could not repeat the Lord's Prayer, and ten could not recite the Lord's Prayer. It was only in the eighteenth century that clergy became upgraded socially and educationally with the ideal of "a gentleman in each parish" to be the centre of advice, concern and social as well as spiritual welfare; roles which have now been taken over by the secular agencies of a less paternalistic age.

Some thirty years ago another, and more substantial, book entitled *The English Country Parson*, by William Addis, was published. The two books seem to have learned heavily of the same source material, since nearly all the facts and anecdotes in Simon Goodenough's book appear also in the earlier work.

The history of the changing status of the country parson has been set out by Simon Goodenough in this well-produced and engaging little book. Inevitably any attempt to compress the history of fifteen hundred years into a hundred and seventy pages must be selective and thematic. Goodenough has chosen to concentrate on its economic basis of the parson's role. It clarifies the (to the layman) mysteries of advowsons, benefices, tithes, the differences between rectors and lay rectors, and between rectors of a sort and vicars—results of the peculiar system of tenure in the C of E which have shaped the life-style of the parsons. To him, rightly, "the Achilles heel of the story" is the twin scandal of the absentee and the pluralist, which affected most the Church to limp from Norman times to (almost) our own days.

He is less concerned with the "godward side" of the parson's occupation; the patterns of worship and standards and belief which might be supposed to be equally determinative of the priestly life. The effects of the evangelical revival of a brief treatment; hardly a mention of the Oxford Movement hardly a mention of John Henry Newman. Yet these two theological movements affected most profoundly the life of the Church and of the priest. Similarly there is no reference whatever to the theological revolution of our own day, typified by the Parish and People movement in the C of E or by Vatican II in the Roman Catholic Church, which is surely as radical as the Reformation itself.

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Acting dumb

John Stokes

GARY CAREY

My Holiday: An Intimate Life Story
217pp. Robson. £7.95.
0 86051 169 3

According to Gary Carey, when Judy Holliday faced the House Un-American Activities Committee in 1952, she adopted the dumb-blonde style of her mother, the actress, Billie Dawn. From the movie *Born Yesterday*, Asked the question was whether Thomas Mann and Albert Einstein belonged to Communist fronts, she replied, with ingenious goodwill, that if they really were Communists, there was no need for them to hide behind a front: "Why not be a Communist? Whatever you are, be it." Carey believes that dramatic imperative to have been both a statement of principle and for those who had ears to hear, a confession of enforced dissembling.

As an explanation of apparently logical behaviour, this has the virtue of recognizing Holliday's ingenuity as a performer, though "Whatever you are, be it" also carries the mechanical ring of a 1940s tip. Was Holliday, who enjoyed the company of jazzmen and later set up home with the saxophonist Gerry Mulligan, instinctively responding, in her hour of need, with one of the atonal inanities of the time?

Holliday is not always so well served by a biographer who works on the principle that persons are easily understood for in the light of later developments. "If Holliday's career had coincided with the present era," Carey proposes, "she would have had greater latitude in expressing her feelings." His reasoning here is dubious: if Holliday's career had coincided with the present, she would certainly have been a different

woman. Penelope Gilliatt got closer to the mark when she wrote that Holliday "caricatures the dopey, pampered woman her men think they want... she does it partly because she finds the disguise a useful decoy that gives her space to think".

Holliday's brilliance lay in the use of disguise as a means of discovery, her goofy way of getting to know who she was. Born in 1921, she grew up in Queens, the product of an unsuccessful marriage between second-generation Jewish immigrants with strong socialist convictions, "Judith Tuvim", as she then was, emerged into a world of changing identities. There is much to suggest that she needed the "space to think".

In the two Cukor classics for which she is best remembered, Holliday's image combines highly stylized comedy with intimate exposure. In *Adam's Rib* she is a Bronx housewife, charged with the attempted murder of her unfaithful husband, who becomes a pawn in a memorable battle between Katherine Hepburn and Spencer Tracy. The film is now so admired that it comes as a surprise to discover that Holliday insisted on her own part being glamorized before she would take it on. In *Born Yesterday*, however, her on-screen glossy appearance does little to hinder "the dawning of Billie", as she accompanies her corrupt lover into the muck of Washington politics, jettisoning him along the way. What links these stunning performances, apart from their latent feminism, is the American conviction that democratic processes should reflect the values of emotional spontaneity: in both cases, the dizzy approach to life is both superheated and vindicated.

Operating at a level below that of the bleakly satirical "buff", but considerably above that of the trivializing "FOOB" (current acronym for "fun of old movies"), Carey, who here is dubious: if Holliday's career had coincided with the present, she would certainly have been a different

students' belief in progress. Since his views are invariably civilized, one is at first apt to applaud the bromides. When Holliday married, her political activities diminished, but then "the post-World War II era was, in fact, a repressive period for women". In 1950 she discovered that she had cancer (it killed her four years later), and she was stricken but in those days, cancer was "a subject never discussed in polite circles".

In Carey's essentially optimistic view of American history, the preservation of mere facts eventually takes on its own reassuring tone. Consider another of his commentators: Holliday suffered because, in the early 1950s, no major star could be overtly Jewish; "Barbra Streisand would change all that—but in 1951, Streisand was nine years old." Both statements may be undeniable, but joined in this way they prop up the Hollywood myth that stars are born to save. In reality, stars are made, not just welded by the studios, but forged out of cultural contradiction. Judy Holliday was a wonderfully inventive and dedicated actress. She was also bound to traditions that her profession required her to deny; abused by some men, she was cherished by others; a woman in conflict. That is why her real self is more accurately glimpsed in the strident courage of her roles than through the consoling hindsight of "Intimate" biography.

The *British Alternative Theatre Directory 1982*, edited by Catherine Izzin (400pp. Eastbourne: Offord. £6.90 93931 49 4), is the fourth edition of a guide to the fringe which now contains sections on 220 theatre companies, 284 venues, community theatre, performance art, dance companies, mime, young people's theatre, puppet companies, and rehearsal rooms. Names, addresses and telephone numbers are supplied, also for 436 playwrights, 249 directors and 94 designers, with details given of the principal national and international festivals.

Upstairs 1.50

Luminaries of the law

Zelman Cowen

DANIEL DUMAN

The Judicial Bench in England 1727-1875: The Reshaping of a Professional Elite
208pp. Royal Historical Society.
£16. (28.87 to members, from Swift Printers (Sue) Ltd., 17, Abdon Place, London, EC2M 5RE.)
019105 80 6

The English and Colonial Bars in the Nineteenth Century
228pp. Croom Helm. £13.95.
035664 486 4

J. R. LEWIS

The Victorian Bar
174pp. Robert Hale. £9.95.
07090 0533 4

In 1828, James Bryce wrote of the English Bar that "certainly no English institution is more curiously and distinctively English than this body". The standing of the Bar among the professions in nineteenth-century England was high; socially and politically it was the most prominent of them. Barristers comprised the most numerous occupational group in the House of Commons, and in the latter part of the century they accounted for about one-fifth of its membership.

The judges of the superior courts, numerically a small body, were drawn from the ranks of the practising Bar. These appointments were highly prized and the judges had a very high standing in English public and social life. Thomas Arnold wrote that he desired nothing more for his son than that he should attain such judicial office. For the most part, the judges were successful and well-known members of the Bar, though there were rare exceptions; Blackburn who was appointed by Lord Campbell to the Court of Queen's Bench in 1839 was little known and had no great practice. He was a distinguished judge who established an enduring reputation and was appointed as the first Lord of Appeal in Ordinary under the Appellate Jurisdiction Act of 1876. At the end of the century a few bad appointments by Lord Halsbury during his very long Lord Chancellorship attracted much criticism, but, overall, these were exceptional among a large number of sound and well-accepted nominations made during this time.

The nineteenth-century English Bar was a small professional body. In 1830 it was numbered under 2,500, though in the course of the next fifty years it almost trebled, even if no other profession had so many qualified members who did not practise. The path to success was rarely very comfortable; many who attained success and professional distinction had long years of bitterness. Walter Bagehot wrote that a man should not go to the Bar unless he had some particular connection or money enough to keep him in idleness for years. In these early years, a needy barrister might seek support from other sources; some earned money from journalism, some had university fellowships. Richard Bethell, later Lord Westbury and Lord Chancellor, had the comfort of the Vinerian Law Scholarship from Oxford.

There were rules against "outing for business" but influence and connections helped the young barrister powerfully. A physician's fees, it was said, had sometimes been set off or cancelled in consideration of a little timely patronage bestowed upon a barrister's son. The most useful of all connections was with members of the lower branch of the profession; the solicitors and attorneys who gave the barristers their work. James Bryce, writing this time in 1864, observed that "some powers of thought and speech are still needed to make a man a leading Q.C., and something still more to make him Solicitor-General, to get into a steady £800 a year practice, improvable by fair diligence, to £1,200 the one thing needful is interest with solicitors". Connections were an early life-line, but continuing support fell away in the face of incompetence.

The distinctive character of the profession had been long established: in the nineteenth century, as before and since, the barrister was the epitome of the independent professional practitioner. He could not enter into partnership with another barrister or with a solicitor; he could not become a permanent employee and still continue to practise as an advocate. There were rules relating to fees and other matters. During the century, some of the rules relating to professional conduct underwent change in such matters as the way in which a barrister might travel, live and conduct himself while on circuit. The coming of the railway affected the character of circuit life; barristers' hearts, it was said, were "with their return tickets".

The governing bodies of the profession, the Inns of Court, were the oldest professional societies in England and their control over the professional lives and discipline of their members was powerful and endured throughout the nineteenth century, despite the efforts of reformers. At the end of the century, the General Council of the Bar was established, but while it fulfilled a demand for a representative professional association which accommodated the entire practising Bar, it did little to diminish the dominant authority of the Inns of Court or to affect their constitution and structures, and they substantially maintained their customary privileges.

The Inns of Court had long lost their educational character and responsibilities. For long, the rite of passage to professional admission and practice was apprenticeship in the chambers of a barrister, a special pleader or a conveyancer. For the greater part of the century, there was no required examination and it was as late as 1872 that the Bar, the last stranger among the professions, established a compulsory examination for admission to practice. Even then it was a poor thing; the *Law Times* complained in 1875 that "the paper requires such a small knowledge that practically the examination affords no test of legal knowledge". There were opponents of examinations; it was claimed that the requirement of a formal legal education followed by examination distracted the would-be barrister from the real task of learning the law. "The paramount evil of the ordeal of examination", it was said, "is that it discourages what I may call the principle of 'apprenticeship'". The three years' preparation for the Bar ought to be spent in the chambers of counsel," Lord Selborne's repeated

attempts to establish a general school of law - a legal university - failed to win support in an atmosphere hostile to what were seen as impractical studies in law, with little relevance to daily practice. So it was said, and these attitudes persisted far into the twentieth century, as I well know; there have long been tensions between the academic and the practising and, I fear, more so in the law than in other professions.

These three books tell us a good deal about the legal profession in the nineteenth century and particularly about the Bench and Bar. Daniel Duman's *The Judicial Bench in England 1727-1875* has a wider reach in time, as the title discloses. Its terminal year is that which saw the completion of the great reorganization of the English judiciary. An earlier reform movement, which followed the retirement of that most powerful obstacle to change, Lord Eldon, from the Woolsack in 1827, was followed in the 1860s by an active campaign to restructure and consolidate "all Superior Courts of Law and Equity together with the Courts of Probate, Divorce and Admiralty into one court called the Supreme Court of Judicature". The efforts of a body of lawyers and judges, Lords Selborne and Cairns prominent among them, substantially achieved their objects with the passage of the Judicature Acts of 1873 and 1875, which established a Supreme Court consisting of a High Court and a Court of Appeal.

Duman's book on the Judicial Bench furnishes a great deal of information about the English judiciary in this period. He uses a computer and statistical analysis to present material which relates to the social origins, education, professional training and experience of the judges. It deals with their social, family and political lives, with their interests outside the law, their life-styles, their holdings and investments. The author, who is a professional historian in an Israeli university, necessarily has much to say about the Bar from which the judicial bench was drawn, and which he follows up in detail in a second book, *The English and Colonial Bars in the Nineteenth Century*, in which he uses similar techniques. Duman has unearthed a mass of interesting material which throws much light on Bar and Bench, and he makes a very useful contribution to the study of professionalism and of the patterns and development of professional life. There is a great temptation to quote from his many interesting findings and conclusions.

Setting back Fagin

Gillian Sutherland

PHILLIP MCCANN and FRANCIS A. YOUNG

Samuel Wilderspin and the Infant School Movement
314pp. Croom Helm. £15.95.
07099 2803 X

Critics and historians of literature have written extensively about illuminatingly about changing attitudes towards children at the beginning of the nineteenth century, stressing the importance of the innocence of childhood both as concept and as metaphor. Historians of education, however, have been slow to see how far, if at all, such changing attitudes were translated into educational precept and practice, preoccupying themselves instead with counting exercises, signatures on marriage registers, schools' levels of fees, patterns of attendance. Philip McCann and Francis A. Young's book therefore fills a great gap and fills it admirably. The sources used are both a model and a treasure-trove. The book is beautifully produced, with even the luxury of footnotes at the bottom of the page.

The core of the book is a lively account of the extraordinary career of Samuel Wilderspin, Dr Young's great

great-great-grandfather. Born in 1791, a London artisan and precocious Swedenborgian, Wilderspin was invited in 1820 to take charge of Quaker Street Infants' School in Spitalfields. His striking success there led to involvement with the Infant School Society, founded in 1824, and thence to almost twenty years' missionary activity, as Wilderspin travelled the length and breadth of the British Isles, advising on and organizing new infant schools. Some measure of his fame among his contemporaries is given by a comment in a *Daily News* editorial in 1846: "When we set forward WILDERSPIN, we set back FAGIN."

Wilderspin's attitude to children under six was unreservedly benign. He saw the first essential steps in teaching to be to catch and hold the children's interest and trust. Ample use was made of play, there were frequent breaks for physical exercise, and the playground was as important as the classroom in the life of the schools. McCann and Young rightly stress the importance of Wilderspin's Swedenborgian beliefs in shaping his view of children and the appropriate way to encourage their development, thereby adding to our sense of the importance of the part played by the more exotic Protestant sects, including those tinged with millenarianism, in social thought and action at the beginning of the

century. One must suffice: when Gilbert in *Trial by Jury* attributed the Judge's progress to his marriage with a rich attorney's elderly, ugly daughter, he was not on a well-established track. In almost 150 years only four men who later became superior judges married the daughters of solicitors. Duman's evidence, based on the ages at which the judges married, and their marriage patterns, as well as on the social origins of their wives, suggests that it is not clear that the judges selected their partners with an eye to improving their professional chances by choosing the right father-in-law. Of course the analysis stops at 1875, and what happened in the harsh century which followed awaits another, or maybe the same historian and another computer analysis.

I have a special personal interest in Duman's chapter on the Colonial Bar. With the prospect of slow progress in a crowded Bar at home, opportunities overseas looked more encouraging and the *Law Times* in 1863 recorded that it was fortunate for the Bar of England that the colonies offered the prospect of professional success. "There is a way to speedy success abroad if only he had the right stuff in him as well as in him." Much earlier in the century, barristers from Great Britain and Ireland were making their way to the Australian colonies. In 1980 I gave an address in Melbourne to mark the centenary of the death of Sir Redmond Barry, who had come from Ireland to Australia in 1839, and who made not only a successful career in the law, but also contributed greatly to the establishment and development of many major public and cultural institutions in the colony of Victoria.

Not long after his death, a local writer recorded that "the colony has reason to remember him as the founder of almost all those institutions which have helped to make this community, otherwise so prosperous in merely material wealth, of at least equal prosperity in intellectual resources". The case of Barry was special, but there were others who came in quest of success and fortune in the law, and who stayed to serve their colonial communities with distinction.

There is another point about the contribution of British lawyers to the colonies. It has been said by Lord Devlin in an elegant essay on "The Judge as Law Maker" that

It is British justice rather than English or Scots law that has been the gift of British lawyers to the world. You cannot visit the countries of the Commonwealth without realizing that. Those who brought the gift to those countries

were the second best, for naturally the best stayed at home; their social contribution to the countries in which they served was nil; they were, if you like, the judicial blimps. But it was the bandwork of the blimps that has survived.

I do not think that Lord Devlin is speaking of men like Barry who came to make their lives and careers in a colony, but rather of those who moved from office to office and place to place in colonial service. J. R. Lewis's *The Victorian Bar* is a different kind of book, though it complements and overlaps with the material in the others. It is a light-hearted, gossip account of the nineteenth-century Bar and its changing patterns and styles. It tells of barristers and of judges, of their rise and their fall, their styles and their morals. One story appears to have special appeal for its author. Within the space of twenty pages he tells us twice that Alexander Cockburn, later Lord Chief Justice, was always accompanied on circuit by Lady Cockburn, but "she tended to be a different Lady Cockburn each time". He also notes that this preoccupation with the Queen and probably cost Cockburn the Lord Chancellorship. He attained judicial rank of great eminence, however, and it is interesting to reflect that it was Cockburn's high Victorian language in the *Hicklin* case which provided the test for the common-law determination of obscenity for a long time afterwards.

I think the test of obscenity is whether the tendency of the matter charged as obscene is to deprave and corrupt those whose minds are open to such immoral influences and into whose hands a publication of this sort may fall.

There are accounts of *causes célèbres* like the extraordinary *Titchborne* case or of Edwin James, who built up a great practice at the English Bar but whose career there ended in disgrace and flight - he made a second start in practice in the United States. A much happier story of a second career is that of Judah P. Benjamin, who had had a distinguished life in the law and politics in the United States and who had been offered and refused a seat on the Bench of the Supreme Court. He was a leading member of the Confederate government in the Civil War, and when the war was lost he fled to England. Not only did he write one of the classics of English law, *Benjamin on Sales*, but he also built up a very good practice and won high esteem at the English Bar.

approach was a narrower and more repressive one, with denominational bias firmly as its centrepiece. These two episodes alone make us realise why Russell, Lansdowne and Russell-Shutleworth did not dare to proceed with more ambitious schemes for national education at the end of the 1830s. The ways in which the initiatives represented by Wilderspin were deformed and choked help us understand more clearly how so much of the provision for the education of the labouring poor in the nineteenth century became restricted and rigid.

Yearbook of European Law, 1981 (472pp. Oxford University Press, £40. 0 19 825384 2). G. Jacobsohn, the words of its editor, the development of European law by publishing substantial and original work of enduring interest. This first volume includes articles on "The European Court of Justice and Human Rights" by M. H. Mendelsohn, on "Common European Policy" by Richard Wainwright, on "Self-Restraint by the EEC in the Exercise of its External Powers" by G. L. Close and on "The European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism" by Michael C. Wood. A section, "Annual Survey", includes papers by Hans-Jürgen Bartsch of the Council of Europe and by Eike von Freytag on "Decisions of the European Court of Justice Relating to the Jurisdiction of the Court".

POETRY

A philosopher of captions

Blake Morrison

PETER PORTER

Collected Poems
315pp. Oxford University Press.
£11.50.
0192111948 6

Peter Porter has never lacked for recognition, but it isn't the sort of recognition a contemporary poet can be satisfied with. To be praised by fellow-poets (as he is in the current issue of *Poetry Review* in his honour), to be represented in the *Influential New Poetry* and Philip Larkin's *The New Book of Twentieth Century English Verse*, to have reviewers press claims on your behalf: this can't be something to complain about; but it is not to be one of the select body of post-war poets - Larkin, Hughes, Hill, Owen, Heaney and now, it seems, Cid Rains - who enjoy the acclaim of a wider public. That public may be confined largely to schools, colleges and universities, but to be deprived of the chance of reaching it is bad for a poet's self-esteem. And though Porter has shown himself to be healthily sceptical about the processes of contemporary defilement, resentment of a sort has left its mark on him. His attitude to Academe is tetchy; normally generous to a fault as poetry reviewer over the last ten years or so for the *Observer*, he can be curmudgeonly about the Chosen Ones of the syllabus, and his recent revision of Michael Roberts's *Faber Book of Modern Verse* goes out of its way to exclude well-loved school anthology pieces (no "Fern Hill" for Dylan Thomas, no "Quaker Graveyard" for the Union Dead) among the Lowell, no "On the Move" from Gunn, "Mr. Clean" from Larkin or "Daddy" from Plath). Not being a megalomaniac, uncertain of the reach of poetry generally (a modest art) he has notoriously called it and of his own in particular, he has allowed himself only such small revenges. But a grievance of sorts is there.

If an injustice has been done to Porter, part of the difficulty has been in locating a central poetic personality. "Who is Peter Porter?" Stephen Spender famously asked twenty years ago. In an *Encounter* review of the Penguin Modern Poets selection of Porter which provided no biographical notes, by now the biography has been filled in, yet the question in a sense still applies: where is the true poet among the many masks? Canonization demands a canon; recognition requires that there be something to recognize - a voice, method or allegiance. But Porter's voice is gerrily, ranging freely between implausible extremes; his "method" has been to take on everything - lyrics, odes, narratives, dramatic monologues, sonnet sequences, haikus, found poems, postcard poems, homilies, "versions" and translations; his brief allegiance to the "Group" never counted for much even in the 1960s and has long since passed into history. As for a canon, the open-door policy of his *Collected Poems* can be seen, not as he would like it to be seen - as a high-minded refusal of high-mindedness ("Reading through the many pages of this book," he has often been visited by feelings of disapproval of my gauche or cocky past as an addressee of defeat: reviewers have never succeeded in telling the good from the bad, and nor has the poet, so we had better have the lot).

There is the further difficulty of deciding which literary tradition Porter belongs to: he was born in Australia, and still holds an Australian passport, yet has lived in England all his adult life. When James McAuley left him out of the critical anthology *A Map of Australian Verse* in 1975, it was because Porter had "given it as his opinion that it would not be appropriate to represent him in this volume". It is that Porter has not written some poems about his homeland but that, like other literary Australians - Hughes, here, he has remade himself in a new image: as he says himself in the poem "Evolution", "I haven't an atom in my body which I brought to Europe" in 1951. This, and Porter's evident

delight in the Englishness of the English language ("language / I would go into the jungle with" "So useful for asking for fasteners in / As well as for caning professors"), put the onus on the English to take him into their tradition; they have, after all, a record of appropriating Irish and American poets, no matter how loudly these sing of their alien roots. But here, precisely, is the problem. Porter is scarcely interested in "roots"; he won't fit the niche of mound-hugger or poet of place. "Some of us feel at home nowhere", he writes in "On First Looking into Chapman's Hesiod", a poem in which, having refused his Australian background, he dreams of the anonymity of a Utopian city "Where one escapes from what one is and who / One was".

Obscurity has not prevented either poets - Geoffrey Hill, for example - from receiving their due. But Porter has had no Christopher Ricks as intercessor; and even his admirers can be reduced to hair-tearing desperation by lines like those from "There Are Too Many of Us":

I see him there, the dedicated man,
His wife in her dressing gown boiling eggs.
Flinty smuts of indignation
Constellated round his eyes - he handles
A letter like a search warrant
And some must burn and some must pay for this;

His choice is how the gods of chance
Fixed the fates of the world,
A paragon of the judging sun,
To be a lemon eye in winter
Through lathered mist but finally
To place the prophet's face with gold.



"Three pregnant women": a woodcut made in Augsburg in 1549. Now in the library of the Wellcome Institute, 183 Euston Road, London NW1, the print is included in the exhibition of German Prints on view at the Institute until May 6.

In this ambition, at least, he has had some measure of success: so invisible is a "real self" in the poems that he has contrived to be thought of as two quite different sorts of poet. For some he is known as a social poet, jokey and journalistic, full of Popean drives and Horatian pleasantries, driven by a love-hate obsession - a *Belshazzar* with the brand-names and shop-fronts of the age: "Espresso sugar" "this new Daks suit" "Phaidon and Skira books" "Hells" and Harrods, "eating in 'Hells' "windings of Vogue", "the Fantasie, Sa Tortuga, Grisbi, Bongio Bo". On unusually intimate terms with commerce and consumerism, he veers between high life and low life, one minute boggle-eyed about the sophistication and affectation of the rich ("She's talking about the different tastes / Of oysters: she can't mean it"), the next bogged down in tacky Orwellian detail of tea-rooms and coffee bars:

Under a covering of yellow glass
Old celluloid, cream-and-tan, tongue-
and-ham
Sandwiches shine complacently, skewered
By 1/6 a round . . .

But if the world is too much with this, it's scarcely evident at all in some of his other work; he has gained a reputation for obscurantism, for disappearance into clouds of unknowing. A caricature of this sort of Porter poem would have a grandiose title ("The Future", say), a Germanic epigraph, an unidentified narrator from a little-known classical legend, an allusion to an unperformed opera, a description of a sixteenth-century Italian painting (perhaps one by Sofonisba Anguissola), a fractured syntax, a train of thought compossible only to the poet himself, and the family cat. Fleeting up Porter's allusions, even knowing that they are there to be picked up, is a particular problem: as Clive James confesses in his otherwise commendatory piece in *Poetry Review*, "Some of the learned poems are so freighted with learned references, that I can't even tell myself which I brought to Europe" in 1951. This, and Porter's evident

This comes from *The Last of England* (1970) and its shift from quotidian close-up to hazy (or sometimes, as here, just murky) long shot can stand for a turning-point in Porter's work overall. There is indeed a version of his apparently contradictory elements into a "development": he is the simple satirical poet of the 1960s who turned serious and obscure in the 1970s. This is too neatly alliterative (even in his Group days Porter was known as an "acid, gloomy, young man" with a "tendency towards ellipses") but, let's say, it's certainly true that satire and comedy came more easily to him than they did to the pleasures of the village headman. Moreover, earnest though Porter is about the gap between the "Two Nations" ("The Rich and the Poor, the South and the North? / No, the Attractive and Unattractive"), it does prevent him from sending up sexual relations (and himself), as he does in the absurd "practical tips" of "How to Get a Girl Friend":

Say to her, Darling, his my hot ear,
Touch my eyes with your tongue,
Care me of the plagues in my mind,
You are the great Aim of my childhood,
All my dreams and my desires are in you,
Crawling to me across the salt Car-paths.

a hater; that would be too wimpy a view, given the splenetic preface described in "What a Lying Liar the Writers Are": "To put it all down I take my pencil up / And a bludge of hate can be slung up top." The problem is more a technical one of sustaining his meekness to the bitter end. This is noticeable in what is probably the best of the early satires, "Made in Heaven", which begins making fun by making puns ("The girl who married money kept her maiden head" "The labour-saving kitchen to match the labour-saving thing / She'd fitted before marriage"), then slides towards pity for its victim, and ends up speaking in her voice:

She thought: I wanted to be a dancer once -
It's a pity
I've done none of the things I thought I
wanted to
Found nothing more exacting than my own
good looks, got through
Half a dozen lovers whose faces I can't quite
remember
(I can still start the Rose Adagio, one foot
on the fender)

The satire is also muted because the young Porter is much drawn to girls of this sort, even though they are usually shown giving him the push. The stance of his early love poems is conventionally Prufrockian, hapless and defeated ("few young boys were kissed as / Rarely as I was", "annubled by that bouffant eggly girl"), but it's also hypergamic in a typically early-1960s way, the lowly young provincial, dressed in "hairy tweed" and "hairy of soul", aspiring to sex with an upper-middle-class girl who perhaps takes him up briefly but then "reverts to type" (the modern equivalent of the Victorian gentleman, "she won't marry the men she sleeps with"). There are several such poems - "Metamorphosis" and "Beet and the Beauty" among them - and in retrospect they look mannered and derivative: "I am the only image I can force upon the town" is pure Thom Gunn, for instance, and there is much of the callow talk of the awkward yearnings of the collar. But the awkward yearnings of the collar, the young persons (for "girls in Joneses", "the blonde from the chemists", "a girl in the Everest Milk Bar") are authentic enough, and there is one remarkable poem about envy of the sexually successful, "The Anthropologist's Confession", where the anthropologist watches with vicarious pleasure the rape of a beautiful young girl by a goatherd, then revenges himself by loving the goatherd killed by the village headman. Moreover, earnest though Porter is about the gap between the "Two Nations" ("The Rich and the Poor, the South and the North? / No, the Attractive and Unattractive"), it does prevent him from sending up sexual relations (and himself), as he does in the absurd "practical tips" of "How to Get a Girl Friend":

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Alvarez's selection of Porter for *The New Poetry* was astute in selecting the best of his early work but misleading about its range. It's clear, now, that a good many other themes were being pursued - memories of a Australian school-days, meditations on the deaths of elderly neighbours and strangers, the sense of a Europe that includes Vienna and the Somme as well as London and Auschwitz. There was even, briefly, the suggestion that Porter might enlarge his art of bourgeois-baiting and become a fully-fledged political poet. In "Your Attention Please" he has left one of the very few poems from the first wave of the CND movement that still have any technical detail that will date (a "beige barometer", "plasma flasks", "D.D. great's container"), but its effectiveness is both comic and (perhaps) finally plausible.

Some of us may be
Remembering that
It is not that he can't find it in him to be

Massachusetts

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Social Development
Richard S. Grinnau
Foreword by Charles H. Page

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John Manfredi

Written by a sociologist with an exceptionally wide-ranging knowledge of art history and styles, this major contribution to the sociology of art studies this subtle and complex ways that art and culture reflect the social order in which they are created. Using examples from literature and the visual and performing arts, Manfredi discusses such topics as "Art, Culture, and Professionalism", "Art as a Socially Constructed Pursuit", "Technique, Significant Experience, Abstraction", "The Playing Out of Artistic Styles", "The Professionalization of Art", and "Critics, Merchants, Consumers, Bureaucrats".
£12.00

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As it turned out, though, Porter did not write any more political poems, coming to believe that "poetry is better at facing us with death, loss of love or the impermanence of beauty than it is at saying 'accuse to somebody'". "Greece needs liberating but not by me" one of his poems puts it. All he did develop from "Your Attention Please" was a fascination with dramatic monologues, especially ones in which an official speaker solemnly elaborates an absurd case – the professor in "To Start a Controversy" explaining the redundant practice of sex to a gaping future, a consumer report on the product "Life" ("the price is much too high"), Death being introduced as guest speaker at the Rotary Club. These poems are abundant in imagination but, being long, don't draw enough on the epigrammatic strengths that Porter was evolving during this period and which showed up best in some of his phrases about sex: "The imaginary marches of the groins", "there is a God in the inviting of a kiss", "while the heart lassis the search is sex", "Love without sex is / still the most efficient form / of hell known to man".

The last of these is one of three Porter entries in John Gross's new *Oxford Book of Aphorisms*, all of them taken from his "Japanese Jokes". Porter's phrase-making is such that it wouldn't be hard to provide other candidates from other periods of his work: "the twentieth century is darkening like a window", "unhappiness lives on, depression dies early", "There will never be equality until we are all equally lovable", "Nobody feels well after his fortieth birthday / but the convalescence touched by glory", "we are all children lying awake after the light is put out" (and pure Auden) "A public worthy of its artists would consist of whores and monsters". To a poet, the danger of aphorisms is that they encourage attention to parts rather than the whole, and there are occasions in Porter, who is no great devotee of the well-made poem, when the lines seem not in the wrong place exactly but as though they could as easily be in the next poem as this one. Against this it could be said that even the worst of his poems are certain to contain at least one memorable phrase-making flourish.

"Phrase-making" might sound too deprecatory a term, something to be deprecated of advertising copywriters, not poets. But then Porter in 1959-67 did make his living as a copywriter and, glad though he evidently was to leave the profession, wouldn't regard it as one automatically deserving of a sneer. Why should he? With him in the offices of C. D. Nottley and Co were Peter Redgrove, Gavin Bwatt, William Trevor, Oliver Bamard and Edward Lucie-Smith – as lively a literary community as one could have hoped to find in any of the universities which, in this period, poets are said to have fled to. Porter learnt much from Ewart (later, perhaps, from Redgrove): it is instructive to compare his "Nine O'Clock Thoughts" and "The World of Simon Raven" with

Ewart's "Office Friendships" and "Fiction: the House Party", even if Ewart has the better of these poems about office life and the upper-middle classes. When Porter calls himself "a philosopher of captions", then, we shouldn't take this to be self-deprecating.

The phrase "a philosopher of captions" comes from a poem of that title which typifies the more "difficult" poetry to be found in the second half of the *Collected Poems*:

The knowledge anyway is worth something.

That no person from this liner-browed brain

Will reach the height of those grave captains

Whose Dantesque walk and Homeric

Still flare on our desolate concrete plain

So late; that I am a philosopher of captions.

"Liner-browed brain" looks disconcerting at first, but suggests a pun ("lined brow"), which in turn prompts an image and set of analogies: the liner with its decks like a lined brow or layered brain; the captains of ships like the creators of poems; problems of control, development and achievement in art. Though apparently dense and obtuse, the poem proves candid and vulnerable once deciphered: Porter lets slip his sense of inadequacy as a poet and his envy of the more successful ("the shouters, the ones met at stations by crowds"), then consoles himself that their confidence and egotism may be misplaced and that a sense of potential still remains with him, "hovering / In the forehead auditorium of sounds". To say that the poem is typically obscure won't do, then: the feelings behind it, though complex and yielded up later rather than sooner, are accessible and intelligible after all. In "English Subtleties" Porter records how, just as he was threatening to "abjure" poetry, he was delivered by the intuition "Perhaps you should say something / A bit more interesting than what you mean". This is the sort of suggestion to set the English empiricist to one reaching for his vitriol, yet Porter is surely right to suppose that he is a better poet for having moved away from the lucid and literal. Opacity has helped him to be truer to his complex self ("I'll never learn simplicity"). His recent work arises from the recognition, derived in part from his love of music, that to mean what you say is not always enough to say what you mean.

In this development, the poetry of John Ashbery, which Porter discovered in the early 1970s, has played a crucial part – a part acknowledged in the generous representation of Ashbery in Porter's revision of the *Poetry Book of Modern Verse*. But the leap forward in Porter's work also has its origin in a tragic personal setback: the death of his wife in 1974. Her death not only gave him a "subject", unwelcome though it was, but brought a new maturity to his vision. "All about lying is to be known beforehand", he had written in a harsh early poem; but in truth he did not know about death, nor therefore about the tragic

dimension of life, until this private tragedy. The poems written immediately before it, in 1972-74, had spoken of a new composure, of "living in a calm country" which is both England and the resigned middle age of the author. *The Cost of Seriousness* (1978) and *English Subtleties* (1981) leave no room for such untroubled postures: they are "composed" only in the sense of being highly formal, most daintily so in "An Exequy", whose brittle tetrameter couplets prove surprisingly capable of accommodating long sentences and sombre feelings:

No one can say why hearts will break
And marriages are all opaque:
A map of loss, some posted cards,
The living house reduced to shards.
The abstract hell of memory.
The pointlessness of poetry –
These are the instances which tell
Of something which I know full well,
I owe a death to you – see day
The time will come for me to pay
When your slim shape from photographs
Stands at my door and gently asks
If I have any work to do
Or will I come to bed with you.

If the themes touched on here – guilt, suffering, retribution, the insufficiency of art – aren't usually expressed so straightforwardly by Porter, this is scarcely surprising. But though we are made to see his feelings through a glass darkly, we can't mistake their meaning. When the poet writes, for example, that "the cost of seriousness will be death", we are in no doubt that he means, in part, that the cost of his seriousness has been her death, that there is something reprehensible as well as inevitable about his dogged pursuit of "talent" – a key Porter word that often comes up in the context of his wife's death ("Why bast thou / held talent above my head / and let me see it, O my God?" "In the end we are condemned / only for our lack of talent", "the one voice / at midnight reminding me that reparations / are exacted of the talentless"). There is even the idea, explicit in "Alcestis and the Poet", of the woman who gives her life to redeem her husband: Alcestis is consoling about her sacrifice – her premature death, was "no more than giving up a good position in the queue" – but demanding of the poet's art:

On the moon, they say, we find
The things we've sacrificed, pristine and
Are cheats. Sited in great art, but fearful
The creatures that we are make little
Go to nothing. The wind urges the trees to
For us: it is not a small thing to die,
But looking back I see only a disappointed
man.
Casting words upon the page. Was it this
I stepped out upon the stars of death
obediently?

Behind marvellous lines like these are feelings so private that it is hardly for an outsider to speak of them at all. Porter, for whom confessional treatment of such emotions would be indecent, prefers to reflect his feelings – through myth, allusion, textual and textual difficulty – so that, paradoxically, they become open to

public scrutiny. The poems of this period are, for example, much preoccupied with art's inadequacy: "words and notes / make little intensity", "the out-of-reach-of-art words", that / pain may be noted some real way". The phrases touch on a general argument about what art cannot do; the more personal burden – that poetry is incapable of expressing what he feels about his wife's death, or of bringing her back – is there, but to put it like that would be for Porter to say only what he meant.

Many who grew up with Porter the satirist find the recent work less pleasurable to read, but anyone coming fresh to the poems would surely have the impression of a poet finding himself late on, after having written some sprightly early poems, then passed through a wayward middle period (heaven knows how George Szirtes in *Poetry Review* can find a Porter *Folio* "perhaps his most dazzling collection"). One symptom of the development is Porter's increased use of the phrase "the gods". God, "heard above all things", is a constant presence, just and indifferent by turns; when the gods arrive they bring with them something more playful and fickle, unpredictable and anarchic. Another symptom is Porter's growing fondness for religious images, such as "fire": these can make his poems seem like allegorical paintings, overwhelmed by big ideas and grandiloquent phrases ("the enroaching fire", "the fire of every change", "the coronation of fire"), but then, suddenly, the voice drops to a heart-rendering literalism:

A card comes to tell you in the fire
you should report
to have your eyes tested.
But your eyes melted in the fire . . .

This is like Tennyson's poem on his father's cremation ("I thought how his cold tongue burst into flame / but only literally"), and also like Hardy's "The Circular", from the "Poems 1912-13", where the poet opens a letter advertising drapery and millinery addressed to "her who before last year ebbed out / Was costumed in a shroud". Porter has only once expressed an interest in Hardy – in the slight poem "Hardy in Westbourne Park Villas" – and might want to dissociate himself from the parochialism of the recent Hardy revival. But it is difficult not to think of Hardy when reading Porter's poems to his dead wife, with their pain and loss, their afterthoughts and afterwords, their ghostly followings and hauntings ("She is coming towards me, / Looking at me to turn me to stone"). Most Hardy-esque of all are the tolling "nevers" of "The Delegate":

Never to puff up those sloping headlands
watching the children ahead negotiating
the lanes of the wide bay: never
the afternoon sun straining
the bedroom light to a thin distinctly
like gin . . .

Hardy-esque as he is here, and earlier on, in his liberal eclecticism, Porter might have been a candidate for Donald Davie's advocacy in *Thomas*

Hardy and British Poetry, but instead received a mild reprimand for his remark that poetry is "a modest art", and then a wider swipe in the poem "St. Paul's Revisited", where Davie describes how the yellow gutters of "Greek Street and Fleet Street" are his part seems to be satirizing Davie in "The Cost of Seriousness": "Unless you agree / To Pound's huge seriousness / I shan't go / on living". The antipathy is a more interesting matter than personal difference: it touches on the continuing problem of pleasing Porter in a literary culture fragmented between the metropolitan and "the provincial". Some in the provinces have identified Porter as one of the Metropolitan Poets, and if this is a shallow prejudice, based not on Porter's poetry but on his living in London and disliking Leavis, there is also the judgment of the Australian Les A. Murray, who has said that Porter "more than any other poet now writing . . . has the metropolitan tone, at once intellectual and colloquial". Yet John Lucas has claimed, equally persuasively, that Porter "is the provincial's sour relish in attacking the absurdities and vices of the world he comes into . . .". The truth is that, though he has often used them himself about other poets, neither label will serve to describe Porter's work: in this debate he can't be admitted but must remain outside as the man from nowhere who is also his own man.

Now that we have the *Collected Poems*, with a comprehensiveness that might better have been avoided but which one can't finally regret, it's time to change the terms of reference and make amends. There are fifteen or so poems here that should establish Porter as one of our finest poets – among them "Sydney Cove, 1788", "The Sadness of the Creatures", "On First Looking into Chapman's *Hesiod*", "The Lying Art", "An Exequy", "The Delegate", "English Subtleties", "Alcestis and the Poet", "Talking to You Afterwards" and "The Werther Level", not to mention the translations of *After Marlow* (1972), which deserve a study in themselves, and get it from Alan Brownjohn in *Poetry Review*, "Embarrassment abounds". Porter writes in "A Philosopher of Captains", "That pain is the one immortal gift of our stewardship", meaning that he feels awkward that the best of his work should be about suffering and loss, and perhaps more hopelessly than that, far all the "epitaphic hopefulness" which will survive of his is pain. But this is a cost of seriousness, and Porter is a serious poet with high ambitions for his "modest art".

"Poetry Australia" for August 1982 (No 84-5; 144pp) is a double issue edited by Grace Perry and including poems by Barry McInerney, Les A. Murray, Rachel McAlpine and Mark O'Connor; the January 1983 number (No 86; 72pp) is a special Tasmanian issue, guest-edited by Vivian Smith. Subscriptions (22 annually) are available from Poetry Australia, Market Place, Berrima, NSW 25577.

Modernizing touches

Richard Brown

ANDREW MOTION

Philip Larkin
92pp. Methuen. £1.95
0 416 32270 0

Carloads of isms (and post-isms) netted the TLS reviewer of the first batch of slim volumes in Methuen's "Contemporary Writers" Series. The isms may well prove the most controversial part of Andrew Motion's study of Philip Larkin, too, for Motion, though he is by no means the slave of an excessively abstract or theoretical approach to his subject, nevertheless takes as his starting-point the idea that Larkin has more isms – more modernism and symbolism – to be precise – than has normally been supposed.

Not all of the energies of this short study go towards making his claim. Motion provides a useful biographical outline, concentrating on Larkin's time at Oxford and on the strong directing influence of Kingsley Amis, and he

gives a full and sensitive reading of the two novels of the 1940s, *Jill* and *A Girl in Winter*. But it is for the attempt at redefinition that the study is most likely to be noticed, for it is argued here that Larkin's poems make play with models from Gautier and from Baudelaire, that the Larkin persona is inherited in part from Eliot's "Prufrock" and that, throughout, the poetry is dripping with memories of Yeats. These symbolist or modernist elements are demonstrated in the earlier poems of *The Less Deceived* and, more speculatively, identified in later poems, such as "Living", "Solar" and the poetic bits in "Vers de Société" (all in *High Windows*) where, Motion argues, the symbolist drive for transcendence can be divined.

The approach is, of course, an idiosyncratic one because of Larkin's incoherence as leader of the anti-modernist cause, whose views are enshrined in brief but well-known criticisms of "foreign" poetry and modernism, whether perpetrated by Parker, Pound or Picasso. Motion pays due tribute to Larkin as a "reluctant pioneer" of this kind but

calculates that a more novel approach will have its advantages.

There is little risk of restating the obvious and the well-known in this kind of treatment. It serves the purpose of opening the poetry to new kinds of interest, especially to the aggressively new kinds of critical approach to the series as a whole, seeks to accommodate Larkin, with his post-stance of age and areas of interest and artfully curtailed areas of interest and his roots (if not much of the character of his verse) firmly in the 1940s and 1950s, seems almost to need such an accommodation to the up-to-date, and it is, perhaps, out of a fear that his subject may seem old-fashioned beside Pynchon, Vonnegut and Fowles, Motion writes. But there is an offensive as well as a defensive element in this desire to present Larkin as a synthesizer of modernism and a traditionalist inheritance: a healthy refusal to accept that either the modernist or the traditionalist must be sacrificed to the claims of the other, and, one senses also, an attempt to lay claim to Larkin as the true ancestor of the current generation of poets with whom Motion is identified.

Church and Cabinet

Roy Foster

DONAL A. KERR

Prof. Priests and Politics: Sir Robert Peel's Administration and the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland, 1841-1846

399pp. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

£19.82/1891 5

There is a comparative study to be written about the effect of Irish office on the careers of British politicians: those who went native, like Balaquiere, those who went off the rails, like Foster, those who were tempered in the furnace, like Castlereagh and Balfour. The Chief Secretaryship was often used in the nineteenth century to set out sheep from goats – unlike the Secretaryship of State for Northern Ireland, which nowadays seems to confer the right of future promotion upon even its most disastrous incumbents. One of the few disappointments in Donal Kerr's excellent monograph is the cursory attention paid to Peel's connection with Ireland in his early career; it was important in giving him, at the very least, the lifelong distaste for jobbery which may have alienated his colleagues every bit as much as adorning Maynooth or repealing the Corn Laws. It also gave him in dislike of the extreme Anglicizing inoperable from Irish confrontations, and prepared the way for his battery of initiatives in the ministry of 1841-6.

Professor Kerr's scholarly and fair-minded evaluation of these indicates as imaginativeness and a determination not always credited to Peel: by relating the government's policy-making to ecclesiastical politics in Ireland, a vital dimension is supplied which has been missing from earlier studies, and what emerges is an important revisionist critique. There is more here, however, than a study of church and state; unlike some other pioneering work on episcopal manoeuvres, Kerr pays close attention to the church at consistory level. His is now technically inaccurate in saying that "there is no comprehensive published study of the Catholic church in Ireland in the decade before the Great Famine", since Gill and Macmillan brought out S. J. Connolly's *Important Priests and People in Pre-Famine Ireland* two years ago; but as they have made it temporarily "unavailable", the status quo ante prevails. Kerr devotes his first chapter to a detailed and informative outline of popular religion, church organization, clerical politics in the 1840s; most importantly, the literary evidence cited (though produced in rather a cataloguing manner) is in Irish as well as English. The resulting picture of popular religious practice in some ways modifies Emmet Larkin's influential theory of a "devotional revolution" after the Famine. At a later point, the social background of the Maynooth priesthood is carefully examined, and appears as more middle-class than generally imagined. The picture of the church in the parishes is amplified by a consideration of O'Connell, all the great enigmas of nineteenth-century Irish history, by comparison, Farnell is guilelessly transparent. (Did the Liberator really believe, as he assured Cullen, that Protestants were Protestants only for "political reasons", and after Repeal and disendowment would be painlessly absorbed into the Catholic church?)

The O'Connell who emerges here is far more politically formidable and strategically acute than the Young Ireland picture of the 1840s allows. Similarly, Peel's advisors and lieutenants are stronger and better informed than Norman Cash, for instance, has painted them – Eliot floating the idea of an increased Maynooth grant surprisingly early, a readiness to countenance the Charitable Bequests Act and seminary endowment should not be over-interpreted; at one stage Graham believed that if Repeal "came to a struggle, we must call on the Protestant Yeomanry in the North and put arms in their hands". But the shifting attitudes between opposition and office, and the existence of a moderate and diplomatic party in the Irish Church, led by Archbishop Murray, opened the way for advance. Murray, the sort of primate capable of dismissing a zealous colleague as a "pious little fool", is one of the figures painstakingly rehabilitated by Kerr. Another is the smug Anthony Blake, a Dublin solicitor known as "the backstairs Viceroy", who provided an unofficial link between the Castle, the bishops' palaces, and Whitehall. It is at this juncture that the phrase "Castle Catholicism" became current, but each period of the Union, when analysed by a path-breaking monograph, reveals such a figure: they deserve their own history.

Peel's government attempted to give the Catholic church in Ireland a Charitable Bequests Act, which it claimed fettered its independence, an increased Maynooth grant, which it feared presaged government control of the priesthood, and a university system which it denounced as "godless" rather than non-denominational. The rhetoric of being congenitally hard to please, combined with ultra-Protestant paranoias, concealed attitudes that were often more accommodating than suspected. But the future lay with intrinsigents like Archbishop MacHale; and the triangle of confusion between the Irish bishops, the Curia, and the Cabinet, complicated by wishful thinking at every corner, described a pattern which was to be traced again in the 1880s (and, indeed, at later periods too).

The measure that came nearest to pleasing all parties was the Maynooth grant; and here there was less involvement from Rome than in other instances, which may not have been coincidental. It was no less a cause célèbre for that. In terms of English politics, Maynooth is remembered chiefly for bringing on a bout of abstract Gladstonian agonizing, entertainingly reconstructed by Richard Shannon; but as Kerr reminds us, the issue dominates the columns of *Hauser* in this period. It also, of course, occasioned a backlash in the Conservative Party which prefigured (and made inevitable) the explosion over repeal of the Corn Laws. By then, the Famine was changing the terms of the Irish question, and Peel's policy had run aground over education: an inescapable surface by one brought nearer to consult Irish opinion. In opposition for the last few years of his life, Peel took his rhetoric further and faster than before, surpassing Young Ireland as well as O'Connell. However, though imaginative Tories in future administrations would try to play the conciliation card, the pattern was set: in terms of reference which Professor Kerr has done a great deal to elucidate date.

Hillside Horse

Flat colour of fences,
the changes in the weather
reflected under the eyelid
of the hillside horse,
adjusting around it
all the apparatus of its
individual equine peculiarity,
as it submits
to the deepening occult demands
of the landscape,
pensive, shabby
and somehow persisting in mockery.

Penelope Shuttle

Literature



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The supernatural frisson

Douglas Dunn

GEORGE MACKAY BROWN
Andrina and Other Stories
153pp. Chatto and Windus/The Hogarth Press, £7.50.
0 7012 0546 6

George Mackay Brown's fifth collection of stories marks a new development in his writing. Instead, its authority and assurance underline the mature excellence of his work in prose. Since *A Calendar of Love* appeared in 1967, Brown has perfected a narrative style of great simplicity, its virtues drawn more from the ancient art of telling tales than from new-fangled methodologies of fiction. It is an endeavour that has continued in keeping with the sentiments of his brief Preface to his first collection, "Orkney", he wrote then, "is a small green world in itself. After some slight elaboration of that, he wrote: "I found that still centre all these stories move."

In many writers Brown's emphasis on place and loyalty would seem a ponderous assertion. Fifteen years later, however, his pledge not only remains unbroken, but is still a fruitful source of stories and poems. Few places can have been written about with such robustly affectionate inviolability as Brown's Orkney.

Even so, Brown's rootedness, and the convictions which follow from it in his writing, are at odds with the concerns of contemporary life almost everywhere apart from the far north, and a few other pockets of European farming-and-fishing existence. Much of the reader's delight in his histories

and characters is bound to be a kind of envy or nostalgia for distant ancestry—a nostalgia to be guarded against when it comes to resembling the false approval of the reader nodding his assent out of dissatisfaction with the urban condition.

Much of *Andrina* is concerned with the past, whether that of history or of legends and tales. "A Winter Legend", for example, is a fairy tale on the theme of time and human age. The fact that we can tell what it is about gives the story an uncanny sense of having been handed down through many generations without parts of it having been lost or corrupted in the process of re-telling. Only a poet of Brown's imaginative, historical, religious and place-loyal disposition could have written something that on the face of it seems incorrigibly old-fashioned, but which in the reading convinces with its contemporary language. Much of the same could be said of "An Epiphany Tale". A boy who is deaf, dumb and blind is gifted by three strangers, one after the other, with brief moments of the senses he was born without. Whatever the religious significance of this short, brilliantly composed story, it is deeply affecting for the strange beauty of life it conveys, whether of sound, smell or touch.

"The Chamber of Poetry" and "Poets" are, as their titles suggest, more literary pieces, and less convincing. They are almost manifestos on the nature of poets and poetry. In the first, a room in an inn is occupied first by Li Po, later by a lad from the village who has been used to sitting in the pub reading over his beer. The young man is called Terence, the poet in Housman's *A Shropshire Lad*, and that gives some idea of Brown's whimsy here. Later, the innkeeper has

a look at the list of guests the room has received. Indeed, yes: a very impressive list.

If the room at that timeless, placeless inn suggests an idea of poetry as a secret, scorned, hidden art, then this is in keeping with the three stories of "Poets", beginning with a Chinese satirist, and ending with a young hopeful whose poem in something called "Digging — A New Verse Quarterly" changes his status in the community. It is interesting that Brown should hold and dramatize a belief in poets and poetry which many readers will find unreal or sentimental, and that unreality may even be a source of his strength. There is certainly something defiant, grand and lonely about his depiction of poets as solitary possessors of an asocial dedication; if true, it might have been dramatized with deeper psychological veracity than the conventions of Brown's manner allow, given as it is to folkish brevity and quick, ballad-like explanations (or no explanations). For all the beauty of his crisp, lucid phrasing, it is seldom of the sort likely to lead him into the minds of his characters, while his characters are seldom of the sort ever to invite a fuller embodiment of their mental processes.

"Magi" offers three accounts of the three kings who brought gifts to Christ in the stable, and where they came from. They are stories about destiny, told with wonderful skill — the third especially, set in the far north of the eskimos. I can think of no one who writes better than Brown about cold, ice, and weather in general. Again, though, the eskimo boy whose destiny lies elsewhere than as chief of his tribe, and who spurns the social practicalities of hunting and leadership for carving on walrus ivory, is like Brown's poets —

men and women who turn their backs on what the community alleges to be their responsibilities.

"King and Shepherd" and "The Feast at Paplay" are historical tales, the first showing how a precursor of Genghis Khan decided to turn back for home after an encounter with a shepherd reminds him of his humanity and his own flocks of sheep, the second taking its cue from an episode of the *Orkneyinga Saga*. Brown excels here in his evocative, deft picturing of time and place, with no mention of the actual date or setting. At the same time there is a greater psychological truth in the writing: the characters seem more like people than the figments of a story; the result, perhaps, of the dramatic irony over which the story is cunningly folded.

The little story "Andrina" was made into a film for television by Bill Forsyth last year. Like much of Brown's work it relies for its *frisson* on faith in the supernatural, on how fate follows a wanderer to that moment of truth which explains a life. It is a ghost story in which the crudeness of much writing in that genre has been avoided. Enough of the conventions remain for the credibility of "Andrina" to be smudged — although the truth of what it says is beyond doubt. The manner in which the story is conceived, and then told, seems curiously if beautifully out of date, almost as if old ways of writing stories stumble in Brown's work, against more recent expectations. In writing so controlled, however, by a poet perfectly at ease with his imagination and a language natural to his, the effect of that apparent collision of old and new can only be fruitful and challenging, as well as, in this case, profoundly enjoyable.

Travelling blindly

Linda Taylor

DAVID WHELDON
The Viaduct
175pp. Bodley Head, £5.95.
0 370 30519 1

The viaduct spans the city and provides a diminished view of it. In the days of the railway, trains sped across its arches. For a man in prison, who can see it from his cell window, it represents distance and freedom, and it is on its overgrown track that we meet "the freed man" (or Alexander A.) as David Wheldon's first novel opens. It might be the beginning of a thriller (A. is being pursued) or something Kafkaesque (the crime was an unspecified sedition; people and places are nameless). More the latter than the former, the book is, in fact, a long extended metaphor — the one about life being a journey. For, as A. follows the track away from the city (his pursuers cease their pursuit at something called the boundary line, he discovers many more tracks than himself. Though none of them know why (and, indeed, questions about where one is going are taboo on the railway), they are all heading in the same direction — towards the beautiful but illusory hills. The parallel, between travelling and life, are not hard to construct — as the tall man tells A. when he describes a conversation he once had with a trackside philosopher: "He was telling me the usual things. He was drawing the analogy between the length of the railway and the passing of time. That's an old story." As old as the hills, in fact.

The journey along the track (like life?) is tedious but compulsive. The travellers think about food; they talk, when they happen upon one another, in repetitive snatches; they are superstitious about the towns and villages that they pass — the inhabitants, A. is told, are fiercely hostile to travellers, or vagrants as they call them. Wheldon shows what a tall tale there is between notions of the glorious freedom of travelling and the paralytic banality of vagrancy. And A., while conscientiously learning all the rules of escape, keeps his options open. He knows, though he doggedly follows the track away from the city: that it will, inevitably, return there. That is his fate.

Thus *The Viaduct* poses the problem of how we should live our lives. On the one hand, there is the static life of the unit — the order, persecution, industry, dependence and caring of the towns and cities. Or, there is independence, solitariness (or loneliness) and transience of the traveller, the rolling stone. Though little attention is paid to the virtues, or otherwise, of static life, Wheldon doesn't seem to think that there's much of a value going on the railway either. He is good, however, at conveying the way in which the apparent freedom and honesty of the transient life ultimately lead to a lack of communication and dullness. Either route leads to death, of course, and the novel begs the question as to which one is preferable. Inconclusiveness provides. In one momentum, though, and one is compelled to turn the pages, as if the book in much the same way as the travellers feel the blood being put on foot in front of the other. Gradually we begin to realize that the terminus really doesn't exist but, still, there must be something, mustn't there?

Apparently not. Stevenson, who knew a great deal about travelling, said "To travel hopefully is a better thing than to arrive, and the true success is to reach the labour." Wheldon, in his grinding, onward, relentless "hopefully", "blindly", and in his dim vision (like a blind man), leads to death, and inner emptiness of the labour involved. A. is portrayed as an inadequate, ineffectual, and inept figure, and he is, as it were, on the road rapidly gives up any remaining sense of faith he has in the only thing in life that had caused him effort and pain — his seditious manuscript. While he escapes from the static company of his captors, he still wants to persecute him for it. He merely joins another set of travelling automatons. David Wheldon's vision is bleak, but it is oddly, sorrowful.

FICTION

Roman façade

Michael Tilby

MARGUERITE YOURCENAR
A Coin in Nine Hands
Translated from the French by Dori Katz
116pp. Aiden Ellis, £7.50.
0 85635 123 9

We could perhaps be forgiven for thinking that Marguerite Yourcenar is a comparatively recent French discovery. So it may still come as something of a shock to be reminded that *Denier du rêve*, or *A Coin in Nine Hands*, as Dori Katz's American translation has it, dates, in its first version at least, from 1934. And still more of a shock to note that this was the third novel of a writer senior in years to both Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir. Let evocation of Mussolini's Rome — the central "event" in a young woman's garbled tale — be a deft and intelligent piece of writing that occupies a central place in Yourcenar's disparate oeuvre.

It is also a work to which she has willingly returned on more than one occasion. In 1958, it underwent thorough revision, to emerge half as long again and in almost every way an improved original. Still fascinated by her characters, Yourcenar went on to produce a stage version (*Rendre à César*) at the end of which she amused herself by listing for all the characters the date and place of their birth and death. The circumstances of their deaths are often eloquent. Marianne, the water-woman who accepts partly down unquestioningly, dies, we are told, at Stalingrad in 1943, the ambiguous agent-provocateur, Marlene Iakovlev, at Auschwitz. In a radio interview some years later, she admitted that she was sometimes tempted to write a sequel tracing the subsequent histories of those who had survived the events of *A Coin in Nine Hands*.

This Gidean sense of "pourrait être continué" is rendered particularly acute by the fact that, flashbacks apart, the action of *A Coin in Nine Hands* occupies only twenty-four hours. Links, deliberately either substantial or flimsy, exist between a whole gallery of picturesque characters; Yourcenar herself talks of "escapes from a *commedia* or rather a modern *tragedia* à l'italienne". A number of the characters are further linked by the symbolic passing of a ten-lira coin. (The specific coinage of denier, which are quickly absorbed into the novel's network of themes, are lost in the English title.) Yet they are ultimately of little interest in themselves. They are subordinated by their very symbolic attributes to the evocation of place and Yourcenar's powerful, evocative presentation of Italian fascism. The city is a shifting amalgam of Julian Casanova, the Baroque externals of Catholicism and the home of the *Fascisti*, interwoven with these elements are the illusory worlds of cinema, opera and prostitution. The overall impression is of an artificial façade which fails to conceal the emptiness beyond.

Mussolini is omnipresent but never on view, except in the epilogue, where his bedtime thoughts are briefly recorded. (This is perhaps the sole addition to the original text that might be regretted, though it could be seen as highlighting the ambiguous relationship between the fictional and the real that runs throughout this "half-realistic, half-symbolic" world.) Instead, he is glimpsed on a poster, or direct applause is heard from one of his public meetings. His portrayal is all the more suggestive in that we are not long ago and she can't cope. Nor can the Aschers, for it was not only the literary world that Lucy Ascher was lost to. Claire becomes relatively sympathetic to us when she can release Helen and Ray, perennial victims of journalism and necrophiliacs, from their rôles in her private melodrama. Self-involved to the end, she nevertheless finds a place in someone else's life and everyone feels a lot better.

To achieve a balance between the magazine psychology of the central

intellectual Carlo Stevo (who, like the book's other central figure, is absent throughout) just as the pathetic Giulio Lovisi seeks solace in the twin father-figures offered by Christianity and the dictatorship.

The significance of Yourcenar's vision of Rome is never directly stated, but conveyed allusively and alluringly through an original handling of form. This is at heart an ironic and even playful novel. The omniscient narrator, endowed with a roving cinematographic eye, creates a deliberate impression of stylization, as does the mingling of the straightforwardly mimetic and the world of myth, or the abrupt changes of style and tone.

A Coin in Nine Hands is perhaps most satisfying for its compositional techniques, and this makes comparison with the original version — though it's not easy to find particularly interesting. Yourcenar has said that in rewriting the novel she wanted to reinforce the impression of historical reality, and strengthen the book's political theme rather than its mythical dimension. This is indeed what she has done. The rôles of the artist Clément Roux, the flower-seller and the water-woman are enlarged and politicized, while the café-owner is a new creation. The passing references to the Dictator likewise become more numerous. Comparison also reveals, incidentally, many changes of detail in the presentation of the curious Miss Jones, which may confirm our impression that this impoverished and timorous young woman of sordid disposition is a more important character than she might at first seem. But the most satisfying changes are quite simply literary. The original novel now strikes the reader as rather too skeletal. Twenty-five years on, Yourcenar makes the characters and settings much more tangible; the dialogues have a greater naturalness. Yet respect for the original vision prevails. *A Coin in Nine Hands* remains a novel of its time, and not just as a result of its now historical subject.

Forever ambergris

Victoria Rothschild

MEG WOLITZER
Sleepwalking
215pp. Michael Joseph, £7.95.
0 7181 2216 X

Meg Wolitzer's first novel is, to use its own language, "neat" and "weird": it's about people who are really "out of things", in short, it is "too much".

Three morbid and self-absorbed young women indulge each other's obsessions with three dead, introverted poets (suicides, of course): Anne Sexton, Sylvia Plath and Lucy Ascher. The three young women, nicknamed the "death girls", lead the usual sophisticated life but art and death are inseparable, and almost indistinguishable, except that Claire, on whom the novel focuses, has a boyfriend and wears ambergris so liberally that the others seem "to be missing a dimension". Not content merely to read the Works, each of the girls has to pay some kind of homage to her idol's earthly remains. Claire is moved to become an heir to the Ascher parents, and what happens then in the plot.

The "death girl" number, in Claire's case at least, seems to have had some purpose, as a kind of defence not simply against growing pains, but against another, more irrefragable pain: her loved brother died of leukaemia not long ago and she can't cope. Nor can the Aschers, for it was not only the literary world that Lucy Ascher was lost to. Claire becomes relatively sympathetic to us when she can release Helen and Ray, perennial victims of journalism and necrophiliacs, from their rôles in her private melodrama. Self-involved to the end, she nevertheless finds a place in someone else's life and everyone feels a lot better.

To achieve a balance between the magazine psychology of the central

The undiscovered country

Fleur Adcock

KATHERINE MANSFIELD
The Aloe: with Prelude
Edited by Vincent O'Sullivan
164pp. Manchester: Carconet £6.95.
0 85635 455 4

The Aloe was the title Katherine Mansfield gave to the original version of the story which was eventually published in 1918, hand-set by Virginia Woolf for the Hogarth Press, as *Prelude*. Like much of Mansfield's important work (most of it still to come) the story had its genesis in her memories of her New Zealand childhood; the characters, the Burnells and their relatives, are the members of her own family — her businessman father Harold Beauchamp, her fragile mother, her sisters, grandmother and aunt — and the setting is the large house in Karori (now a suburb of Wellington but then still rural) to which the family moved from the more central Tinakori Road in 1893, when Katherine was four.

The action of the story is limited to the move itself and the process of settling into the new house, but these are presented with a remarkable immediacy and intensity of vision. Mansfield's narrative technique, combining external description, dialogue, and the straightforward unfolding of events with interior monologue and the memories and imaginings of the various characters, invites the reader into each of their minds in turn to show how each perceives the other against each other and respond to events. The first sentence, common to both versions, plunges in *medias res*: "There was not an inch of room for Lottie and Kezia in the buggy." From here on we share the perceptions and assumptions of the characters themselves. There are no explanations, but no obscurities; things reveal themselves as they need to, flickering in and out of the time-shifts

and changes of viewpoint. It is extraordinarily modern writing; no wonder Virginia Woolf was "jealous".

Mansfield began *The Aloe* in March 1915 in Paris, during one of her absences from John Middleton Murry, and worked on it again there in May, but it received a new impetus after the death in October that year of her beloved younger brother, Leslie. For months she was too stunned to write at all, but when she began again it was with the aim of preserving memories of their New Zealand childhood for his sake. She wrote in her *Journal*: "Oh, I want for one moment to make our undiscovered country leap into the eyes of the old world. It must be mysterious, as though floating — it must take the breath . . . I shall tell everything." Some weeks later, in February 1916, she resumed work on the story.

By this time Murry had joined her in Bandol, in the South of France. They sat writing on opposite sides of the kitchen table in the Villa Pauline, and in spite of Katherine's grief for her brother it was, as Murry later said, the happiest time of their life together. She herself wrote, looking back on this period, "I've two 'kick offs' in the writing game. One is joy — real joy — the thing that made me write when we lived at Pauline. . . . The other 'kick off' is . . . an extremely deep sense of hopelessness, of everything doomed to disaster." The joy is reflected in both versions of this story; the hopelessness is also present here and there (in Linda Burnell's fatalism and her detachment from her children, for example), but it shows up more clearly in the original version and in Mansfield's marginal note on what she planned for the ending but did not in fact execute: "They cut down the stem when Linda is ill. She has been counting on the flowering of the aloe." By 1917, when she revised the work for publication, her despair had receded and more dispassionate artistic considerations guided her.

Vincent O'Sullivan's edition offers a

parallel text, with *Prelude* and *The Aloe* printed on facing pages for comparison. The text of *The Aloe* is taken, to begin with, from a fair copy of the portion Mansfield wrote in Paris, but the last two thirds of it are from loose sheets and notebooks, and reproduce her original working drafts, in which we can observe the rush of her creative flow, interrupted from time to time by second thoughts. The parallel presentation is convenient and easy to follow — there are no significant changes in the order of episodes between the two versions; but countless minor amendments and a number of excisions make the final version notably tighter and more polished than its predecessor.

The purely descriptive passages, such as that about the garden at dawn, seem to have given the author most trouble; conversation, particularly between the brilliantly portrayed children, came more naturally to her: there was always something childlike in her sensibility. Of the sections which were afterwards deleted altogether, the longest are one in which the wife, Linda Burnell, recalls her courtship by the red-haired, blushing "Ginger Whale" whom she was to marry, and another which lays open the thoughts of a peripheral character, her married sister. In the finished work the main focus alternates between Linda herself, her restless and romantic younger sister Beryl, and the child Kezia (alias Katherine), with fewer excursions and digressions.

Two small fragments were later incorporated in revised forms, into a subsequent Burnell story, *At the Bay*. The rest, charming and entertaining though they were, Mansfield had the discipline to abandon. It is interesting to be able to read them now, while at the same time recognizing why they had to be sacrificed. This edition gives a useful demonstration of self-criticism in action and a fascinating insight into the procedures of a pioneering writer of fiction.

The trade and its tricks

Marigold Johnson

ANTHONY OLIVER
The Property of a Lady
220pp. Heinemann, £7.95.
434 54393 4

Detecting fakes is part of Anthony Oliver's job — his job, that is, as a dealer and expert writer on Staffordshire pottery. Unexpectedly, then, to find his second novel suggesting the pedigree and outward signs of crime fiction, yet unlikely to foot any real butt and resisting classification. The trappings are almost too conventional — a Grand Guignol murder, a mysterious vanishing Lady Incognito, an eccentric beady-eyed female sleuth who could have been played by Margaret Rutherford, a cat called Bunter, a rural Suffolk setting — even a redneck Detective Inspector complete with pipe. Perhaps, despite this incorporation of all these pointers, Mr Oliver is a bit of a tease, and has decided that crime and its detection mix well with the world he knows. Certainly one might conclude from *The Property of a Lady* that in the antique trade the greater the flair the greater the villainy.

Sly young stranger Mark Carter is the focus of gossip in Flaxfield when he is literally picked up, after collapsing at the roadside, by nice Margaret, who's inherited a cottage and a decent bank balance from Mum. To Lizzie Thomas, a clever, comely and dumpy Welsh widow with a good pair of binoculars, his violent efforts at atoning a cat suggest that Mark may be a psychopath, and her solid admirer Webber, who needs something as well as Lizzie's insignificant cooking to keep his CID brain in trim, soon takes the bait. But Margaret, nearing thirty, is easily flattered into selling her inheritance, marrying her Adams, and jointly setting up shop with a modest but high-class stock of antiques — Mark, it transpires, being not merely the son of a top dealer but a "genius" in this risky business of spotting the rare piece.

Anthony Oliver has a nice line in trade chat to keep us entertained through the Dunwood Antique Pair, and needs some good practical tips. His climactic scene adds the suspense of

high bidding to the existing tension over just how and when the sinister genius will be triggered into a violent revelation of his sickness. Perhaps it is, indeed, at this point that one firmly removes the novel from the crime shelf. The game is up for Mark right from the start, although we don't learn a lot about murderous psychopaths even from the two sleuths' discoveries; the crime, and its consequence, remain of very marginal concern. We don't mind about Mark's "deep and tragic sense of loss" at his father's death, which has led him to persecute his fee, nymphomaniac mother (who remains off-stage, fleeing from the local health clinic to a villa near Cannes, which gives Lizzie and Webber some good Gallic fun in pursuit). We don't much mind that Mark's acquisition of old surgical instruments and the cellar with its half-filled plastic bags of weighty rubbish bode no good for the innocent bride.

Quotidian quartet

Patricia Craig

MAEVE BINCHY
Dublin 4
208pp. Century Publishing, £7.95.
(paperback, £2.95).
0 7126 0105 8

The setting for the four stories in Maeve Binchy's book is the post-war district known as Dublin 4. The double meaning gave her a title; as double meanings go, though, this one isn't noticeably pointed or illuminating. It indicates a penchant for neatness rather than ambiguity or wit, and neatness duly emerges as a feature of the stories. The first is called "Dinner in Donnybrook" and concerns the odd behaviour of a housewife who alarms her friends by sending out a dinner invitation to her husband's mistress: "It was the act of a madwoman".

It isn't, in fact. Carmel Murray has laid a deep plot to detach her husband from the Other Woman; to which the reckless invitation plays a part. While her action is causing a most remarkable stir — "Ethel said: 'I have the most awful feeling, like doom, as if

because Margaret, for all her brisk way with bank managers, and romantic samplings along the Suffolk shores, remains a nice cardboard *ingenue*."

What the author enjoys, and succeeds in making his reader enjoy, is being mildly disrespectful about his trade and its tricks, and inventing a line-up, colourful and (dilly) labelled, of comic figures each with a turn to perform. Besides the domestic charm of Lizzie's wooing of Webber (recipes and all), we meet her dealer daughter Doreen, wife of "Betsey" Trotwood with the ginger wig and the up-market BBC gay contacts and a heart of gold; we go inside Henworth Hall, where leather American dunes of great wealth like Arlene Welke get pummeled by Suffolk youths; there are glimpses of Bond Street grandees coldly outbidding virtue, and ghosts of a wicked past in Victorian tenements, as well as the familiar crime fiction

something dreadful is going to happen" — Carmel plans her menu with equanimity and arranges, through the usual agencies, to have an improvement effected in her appearance: "she must look smart and glamorous and well-turned-out". An ageing homosexual, in Carmel's debt for twenty years, is hurriedly summoned from London to take a hand in the proceedings. The mistress, a fashionable young painter unaccountably infatuated with Carmel's bank-manager husband ("People want extraordinary people"), doesn't stand a chance.

In the second story, a gormless young person from the country gets into a very distraught state over a misdemeanour she thinks she's committed, before acquiring a necessary understanding of casual Dublin ways. The title of this one is *Flat in Ringsend*. "Decision in Ringsend" considers the tribulations of a liberal family in which one daughter is a nun, while the other two, in pregnant. The Problem Pages, the youngest concludes, are surely to assure you that your parents will be very understanding about your state. "Pat's mother wasn't going to smile

territory of windswept East Anglia. There's no doubting the deliberate pleasure with which Mr Oliver nudges our memories of Sayers, Highsmith, and P. D. James.

Here and there, almost hidden by the genial jokiness and the plot chugging to its unsurprising destination, one detects the author indulging in speculation about the Meaning of Relationships. This casts serious doubt on his otherwise admirably light touch. Please tell us have no more "cupping his face in her hands with only the bright light of the blank of his eyes", and plenty more neat images like the bijou Kensington houses "painted in bright loud colours", which have "undergone major surgery, with every inch of space pulled and prodded until the internal pressure had blown the windows out into Regency bow-fronts".

like people did in movies and say . . . that she had missed the patter of tiny booties." Is the point worth making? This is all very facile stuff, marked by ill-judged colloquialism and infelicitous whimsy (" . . . why should people be stirred? They should be left to simmer or cool down or even grow a crust on top of them if they wanted to"). It's one thing to be an acute observer of commonplace aspirations, and predicaments and going-on, as Maeve Binchy undoubtedly is, another to transcribe them with no diminution in banality.

The final offering, about a reformed alcoholic resisting the lure of drink, with support from his wife and obstruction from everyone else, gets closer to the authentic depiction of a plight; characterization here is still rudimentary, though, and inner musings unendurably trite and inelegant ("He had said that he and Clare didn't actually talk, have real conversations; there was always a state of war, where one or the other was winning.") Defences is one of Maeve Binchy's assets; you cannot, however, claim vitality or originality for her stories. What you have here is a quotidian quartet.

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and scrubs behind the ears, with social deference and more than a hint of *ressentiment*. The best of the Methodist character is represented by Sir Herbert Butterfield, the fine moral grain of upright Yorkshire stock, and the worst of all is shown in unctious, prurience, meanness and plain utility. It is a deep ambivalence, covered with a certain self-satisfaction, caught beautifully by Samuel Butler in his *Notebooks*: "When we sing 'Hallelujah, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth' we mean our God is a great God, and we're no small beer ourselves."

Lord Birkenhead puts it this way: My mother and father, they were Wesleyan Methodists and I suppose one would say that they were very, very devoted people. I shall always be grateful for my home life and for the chapel life to which they led me. My knowledge of the Authorized Version and the hymns of Wesley and Watts are certainly some of my very greatest possessions, and at the most formative period of my life I

shall never cease to be grateful for the training I had in religious things. Basil Willey also reveals that half-vanished culture, reminding us how utterly irrelevant was Otto's "The Holy" to most Methodist worship:

Respectability, rather than reverence, was what filled the air of the Edwardian pseudo-gothic building, with its walls of new red brick exuding patches of salty white crystals. The hymns, unless the tune happened to be one of four favourites such as "Gospel" or "Wrestling Jacob", were something to be endured, not sung (my father, I noticed, never sang); the Te Deum, when it occurred, was a penance (I knew what my father thought of it because he used to sing, with suppressed vehemence, the last word only - "confounded"); the prayers, especially the "long" prayer, were embarrassing because in their approach to the Almighty they were the most earnest of those days commonly used a tone of easy

familiarity, as of the leader of a deputation interviewing a trusted but perhaps not too well-informed chief. The sermon was the thing: it was the centre-piece and raison d'être of the whole performance. Upon this I knew that my father's closest and most critical attention would be fixed and upon this I knew that we should have his detailed judgments over the Sunday dinner afterwards.

The right point to end is precisely the Sunday Dinner, which was the real presence of a Methodist church, the sacred elements of roast potatoes, roast beef and Yorkshire pudding, and all of them good for you. To Lancashire flour and jam and Yorkshire pudding. If drinking was a major vice, eating was a cardinal virtue.

When I say Methodism has no "history" I mean that it lost contact with "events", except for the future over the 1902 Education Act and Parnell. Just so did the Church of

England lose contact with events after the Non-Jurors and Dr Sacheverell, declining into a style or styles, into the Trollopean or Oxford Movement scene. Yet what happened in West Africa, South Africa, the West Indies, the Pacific Islands, even in parts of India and China, and above all in the United States, is history of a strangely impressive kind. It is world history because Methodism initiated the idea of the movement. A movement can wither in its birthplace, as several world religions have done, and yet elsewhere create a cultural mode, and even provide some of the defining characteristics of a nation.

Martin Lipsett has argued that the original deposit of Calvinism in America mutated from the Elect to Bostonian Elite. Thereafter the defining characteristic of American culture was provided by Wesley's Arminianism, ie universalist, theology. The Kingdom of God in America really spread when Charles Wesley's "For all, for all, my Saviour died" became the

dogma of universal citizenship. For the Enlightenment, overlay and described by Tocqueville, Methodism is a kind of hearty, familiar, fraternal and egalitarian speech, full of the reasons of the heart, and it is in the United States where the cultural deposit of the evangel is to be found. In Chicago (a city more Greek Orthodox and Polish Catholic than Methodist) you can hear the carillon sounding hymns along the grand canyons between the skyscrapers. In Duke, North Carolina, you can hear the carillon sounding hymns from the bastion of tobacco, Methodism, broadly than any denominational history can encompass, initiated all that above all the way Americans speak. "By speech and by deed, this utilitarian fervour and pragmatic unctious has been more powerful than Anglicanism, and a great deal more effective than good taste."

Martyrdom and merit

J. Duncan M. Derrett

HYAM MACCOBY

The Sacred Executioner: Humm Sacrifice and the Legacy of Guilt
208pp. Thames and Hudson. £10.95.
0 500 01281 4

"Not only does he lie dead on the altar, atoning for the community's sins, but he remains alive, perpetually bearing the sins of the community where they can do no harm - in the desert." So the Sacred Executioner, at long last discovered by Hyam Maccohy, explains at one swoop not only Judas (who turns out to be Jesus's own brother), but also Moses (who, in a frenzy, tried to kill his son, but was let off by his wife's drumming the latter into a circle), being, apparently, a symbol of female dominance. Abraham (who was strangely praised for being ready to sacrifice Isaac - or was it Ishmael?), Ham (who was really Noah's eldest son and castrated him while he was engaged in drunken sexual intercourse), Lamech (who surprisingly killed one of his wives "boys") and Cain, who, among other things, stupidly overlooked a sheep crouching at his door. The Jewish people are scapegoats (with red wool twisted round their horns) for a crime they did not commit. For we are told Jesus was executed - as a messianic revolutionary and was later depicted as a "saviour" by a Hellenistic-magical Paul and whitewashed by pro-Roman evangelists. The Jews, owing nothing to their self-imposed and deeply introverted and lachrymose endogamy, are (it is implied) condemned, like the wandering Jew, into an eternity in which "Friend, patriarchy, patriarchy, pro-Oedipal mythology, Satan, Loki, Shylock and the Virgin Mary dance perpetually to the sounds of an impet and infertile compiler of Genesis rummaging amid the (quite imaginary) genealogies of the Kenites (= Canites = Rechabites) who, while having their own notions about the Flood, wisely keep off the booze. The fact that neither Abraham nor Judas fits is neither here nor there: the latter's bowels, like Atila's blood, act as a fertilizer (Acts 1: 18-19), but

The men (and alas a few women) whom he must be parodying are bold to the point of recklessness. The irony in their sources is ignored as if everything were in dead-pan earnest. Their "documents" are cut and carved, letters and words are changed round, portions are omitted as well and where theories lack support conjecture supplies every need. Imaginary episodes and explanations are professed, and the discipline of history is prostituted to each new requirement of the customers for the time being, the Churches. Buttrick, for example, cut St John's Gospel into bits, rearranged them like a pack of cards, wrote a commentary upon them and was admired by the world. Such antics are reckoned to them for scholarship. They are nothing if not original, and this is what Maccohy is bound to be ridiculing.

Certainly the internal contradictions of the texts, coupled with the poetic gifts of their transmitters, pose continual problems, provocations to the clever man who sees all his predecessors as credulous. Maccohy puts his finger right upon the point. Many will surely puzzle over "The son of man indeed goeth as it is written of him: but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! Good were it for that man if he had never been born." But if one does not admit that it comes from Jesus, or from those who believed it was entirely credible in his mouth, speculation is boundless. Now in fact Jesus was (Maccohy would deny this) a martyr, not for the notion that he was a saviour, but for his belief in a super-religion. For it he accumulated merit at the expense of those who caused him to suffer. The idea that he was sacrificed as extraordinary as his Last Supper injunction - "His own imaginative presentation of his self-chosen mission, as the earliest texts rather betray than assert. No doubt such poetry has diverted attention from his message, as the process of "domesticating" him has gone forward; but it is clear he believed he could redeem all cultures from the burden of their common inheritance (they were slaves to sin): such genius dwells all enquirers unless their comprehension enables them to become his friends (John 15: 14-15).

Meanwhile Judas Iscariot is not the Jewish people writ small, but, as it were, Judas, the elder brother who sold Joseph out later, in Jewish legend, repented and was fully reinstated by that model of forgiveness.

The book deserves some publicity: if only because by a unique chemistry it betrays prestigious ideas. As if it were a "control" it detects as bogus any research into the self-images of ancient cultures which begin from a predictable starting-point. Far outdoing Lewis Carroll in satire upon intellectual fashion, Maccohy's implied and subtle rebuke is deserved. As one conjecture follows another in a seemingly inevitable chain, we are warned of the evils of flattering our readers, as second-rate film-makers construct their products by listing what audiences have paid to see in the past. The publishers have taken a dreadful risk. Reviewers, not noticing the giveaway clue, might have taken the argument seriously. Thames and Hudson have added to their distinguished list an egregious title, which exposes devastatingly the mind of a distinct class of Western society which insults the public by imputing to it an eager credulity and a boundless patience with a self-serving pseudo-science. The book could have been subtitled "The Librarian's Revenge" but that would have deprived the author of all his fun.

The Journal of Jewish Studies, Volume XXXIII Nos. 1-2 (1982), is entitled *Essays in Honour of Sigfried Yadin*, edited by Gera Verme and Jacob Neusner (602pp. Oxford: Centre for Postgraduate Hebrew Studies, £6). It contains forty-six articles arranged in five sections: "Archaeology and Ancient Near East"; "The Bible"; "The Inter-Testamental Period"; "Jewish History in the Hellenistic and Roman Eras"; and "Rabbinic and Medieval Literature and Jewish Thought".

The corporation sole

Peter Hebblethwaite

CHARLES DAHM

Power and Authority in the Catholic Church: Cardinal Cody in Chicago
334pp. University of Notre Dame Press, available in the UK through International Book Distributors. £14.25.
0 268 01536 5

Cardinal John J. Cody, Archbishop of Chicago, died on April 25, 1982. Few cardinals have been so cruelly and mercilessly abused. By dying when he did, Cody narrowly escaped a Federal investigation into allegations that he had diverted up to a million dollars of Church money to a lifelong friend, Mrs Helen Wilson. Cody protested his innocence and attributed the allegations to detractors. On his death-bed he declared: "I forgive them - but God won't." The financial scandal was bad enough. But then a priest-sociologist of the diocese wrote a best-selling novel called *The Cardinal Sin*. Of course the lecherous old goat who appeared in the novel bore no resemblance (said the author) to the actual cardinal of Chicago. But the trial by innuendo continued.

The harassment of Cody is still not over. Now he becomes the first modern cardinal to be studied as an instance of the abuse of power. What makes it worse, Judas, the elder brother who sold Joseph out later, in Jewish legend, repented and was fully reinstated by that model of forgiveness. The book deserves some publicity: if only because by a unique chemistry it betrays prestigious ideas. As if it were a "control" it detects as bogus any research into the self-images of ancient cultures which begin from a predictable starting-point. Far outdoing Lewis Carroll in satire upon intellectual fashion, Maccohy's implied and subtle rebuke is deserved. As one conjecture follows another in a seemingly inevitable chain, we are warned of the evils of flattering our readers, as second-rate film-makers construct their products by listing what audiences have paid to see in the past. The publishers have taken a dreadful risk. Reviewers, not noticing the giveaway clue, might have taken the argument seriously. Thames and Hudson have added to their distinguished list an egregious title, which exposes devastatingly the mind of a distinct class of Western society which insults the public by imputing to it an eager credulity and a boundless patience with a self-serving pseudo-science. The book could have been subtitled "The Librarian's Revenge" but that would have deprived the author of all his fun.

However, it should be said that Fr Dahm is not concerned at all with the sexual peccadilloes (if such there were) and only indirectly with the financial scandal. Here the central charge is ecclesiastical tyranny. The case is proved.

But is there nothing to be said in Cody's defence? There is a sense in which John J. Cody, son of a fireman from St Louis, was a tragic figure. He exercised authority in the manner in which he had seen his seniors exercising it. He knew no other pattern. The size and wealth of American dioceses means that bishops tend to be more like top executives than pastors. "L'Église, c'est moi", French. Being American, what he actually said was: "I am the corporation sole." He did everything in the grand style to the end and left himself isolated and alone in what he insisted

on calling his "Mansion", vainly trying to fend off attacks by censoring the diocesan paper, the *Chicago Catholic*. Thus Dahm's book is built on a paradox: though Cody is blamed for so much that went wrong, he is at the same time absolved on the grounds that "what happened in Chicago arose out of the logic of the institution and not the peculiarities of the incumbent bishop." That does not, however, mean that Cody's predecessors and successors were or will be trapped in the same "logic of the institution".

For it was Cody's arrival at a time when attitudes were in transition that caused the problem. It was perfectly natural for him to keep a tight and personal control on finance, to close down inner-city parishes without consultation, to set up a four-million-dollar TV station, again without consultation. The trouble was that he was dealing with a generation of priests who had imbibed the slogans of Vatican II about "participation" and "co-responsibility", more important perhaps, they had learned on the streets of Chicago how to organize a city ward or a neighbourhood group. They wanted a share in Cody's authority. They thought the instrument for this was the Senate of Bishops. Now Cody was so soon estranged. Cody continued to treat them like children.

Despite the air of learned objectivity, there are moments when it becomes clear that Dahm has his kinks in Cody. Here is Cody arriving in Chicago in 1965 - he came by train in style, picking up on the way the mayors of New Orleans and Kansas City, his previous dioceses: "Portly and slow-moving, he smiled gently left and right. His heavy jaws seemed episcopal." And in a postscript, Dahm sums up the effects of Cody's stewardship: "The giant bestride the wreckage of the Chicago Church. His enemies were dispersed, his scores of others had resigned from active ministry... or even had left the Church." In between, the story is chronicled in fastidious detail.

You might think that enough is enough. But Professor Richard A. Schoenherr, who contributes a foreword, has studied eighty-five dioceses and, we are told, Dahm's general conclusions about Chicago apply to other dioceses as well. Those are joyous news. It remains only to add that Cody's successor, Archbishop Joseph Bernardin, arrived in Chicago in July to immense acclaim. It was noted that his jaws did not look particularly episcopal, that he carried his own bag at the airport, that he actually walked down Michigan Avenue and talked to people. A new, post-Cody era has dawned.

The latest in Mowbray's *Emerging Church Series* is *The Scandal of Poverty: Priorities for the Emerging Church* by John Atherton (132pp. Oxford: Mowbray, £2.64 66825 1). Dr Atherton reports on experiences of poverty in England today: attitudes to the poor, individualism, areas, and institutional explanations of responses to poverty; the Church's role in relation to poverty, and human fulfilment.

JOYCE SUGG (Editor)

A Packet of Letters: A Selection from the Correspondence of John Henry Newman

Clarendon Press. £16 (paperback, £6.95).
0 19 826442 9

OWEN CHADWICK

Newman
Oxford University Press. £6.95 (paperback, £1.50).
0 19 287588 X

The monumental edition of *The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman*, of which the twenty-one volumes covering the Catholic period were edited by Charles Stephen Dessain between 1961 and his untimely death in 1976, has still another five volumes to go, as well as a final index volume. Before all the thirty-two volumes are complete, it is comparable only to that other great enterprise, the still incomplete *Pilgrim* edition of the Dickens letters. If the same literary significance cannot be claimed for it, certainly the Newman letters not only enhance his reputation as one of the greatest writers of English prose but also afford a wealth of material for sociological specialists in various fields.

There are some 20,000 letters extant, from which Joyce Sugg has chosen 155 for her handy little selection (which is not drawn only from the published volumes). Her fresh and interesting introduction makes some excellent and penetrating points. She observes that Newman "was at once very simple and very complex"; and yet at the same time "one is conscious of mystery and ambivalence". She mentions some apparent contradictions in his character, but not the central, fascinating tension in Newman between conservatism and liberalism, the balance of deference to tradition and openness to new developments, which achieved a consummate theological expression in the mature Roman Catholic works. And the subtlety of which often eluded his contemporary correspondents.

Pulpit power

John Whale

DAVID H. MURRAY

My Father Lloyd-Jones: The First Forty Years 1899-1939
244pp. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust. £6.95.
0 8511 353 0

That initial initial would be the clue, if we were needed: Martin Lloyd-Jones was a Nonconformist divine. He was the son of a Cardiffshire general-storekeeper who brought him up within Calvinistic Methodism - a Presbyterian denomination, confusingly, and the largest in Wales. The general store went bankrupt, after a time, and was succeeded by a dairy in Westminister; the young Martin went to Marylebone Grammar School, moved on to Bart's, qualified as a physician, worked under Horard and was held to have a distinguished medical career in prospect. But at the age of twenty-six he decided to go back to Wales as a minister for his denomination and for conservative evangelism.

With his new wife, he took up work at a mission church in Aberavon, a small town on Swansea Bay. Between 1921 and 1938 his congregation grew in numbers and fervour; and he himself, speaking from other Welsh pulpits too, (often on weekday evenings, and sometimes in Welsh), became the best-known preacher in Wales. Large crowds packed small chapels to hear him. On one occasion, excluded from a church, he was asked to speak in the open air. He was asked to pay for the damage. After a couple of successful trips to London and the United States, he left

The cardinal's contradictions

Ian Ker

Joyce Sugg says that paradoxically Newman's "humour flourished most when he was in his sixties and when his life was most dreary". It is certainly true that there are some very funny holiday letters in this period, but I am not sure that they are funnier than the letters which belong to the earlier period of his satirical writings, *Loss and Gain*, *Anglican Difficulties* and *The Present Position of Catholics*. Again, it is oddly impressive to say that Newman found in the Roman Catholic Church "a dogmatic formulation that would satisfy his Christocentric mind". What absorbed the imagination and mind of Newman was the primitive Church of the Fathers: what had become of this early Church where the classic formulations of Christianity had been hammered out? Had it been broken apart into "branches" (as Tractarianism claimed) or was its continuing identity to be found in the Roman Catholic Church in spite of all the obvious differences and dissimilarities? Like all genuine conversions, Newman's was essentially a "recognition" or vision rather than the acceptance or discovery of a theory or argument.

Joyce Sugg does not attempt to answer the problem of the abrasiveness of some of Newman's letters, although she is right to say that he mellowed as the years went by. I think, as others have pointed out, that there is more to it than that. There is no doubt that as a Catholic Newman was more liberal and open than he had been as an Anglican; this was partly the result of experiencing the drawbacks of an authoritarian Church (as opposed to a Church that lacked authority) and partly the result of a new liberating confidence which he enjoyed as a member of a Church sure of its identity and beliefs.

The editor distinguishes eleven separate categories of letters and her selection is on the whole very good and representative. She says that "perhaps the largest group of letters and one of the most interesting is concerned with the 'moral advice'. This may be true if one takes 'spiritual' in a very wide sense. But if one understands it in a narrow sense, then the reader of Newman's letters is likely to be

disappointed. Just as Newman remains almost totally detached from the social (as apart from political) issues of his day, so the letters are remarkably reticent about prayer and the inner spiritual life. It is as if Newman's famous "reserve" precluded him from comment on the most secular as well as the most religious of subjects. There is plenty of excellent practical advice, but virtually no "spiritual direction" in the more specialized sense. Perhaps Newman's explicit disclaimer of any expertise here may apply also to questions of social reform.

There are some very surprising omissions. For example, the last, moving letter Newman wrote from Littlemore to Mrs Bowden should certainly have been included - this traumatic leave-taking is not covered at all. The editor excuses the lack of letters to the colourful Father Faber on the grounds that many of them are dull and on business matters, and that Newman was "cautious and reserved with Faber because he did not trust him". But this is not quite true. There are a number of letters to Faber, particularly in 1849 when the London Oratory split off but before the final break, which are neither dull nor cautious: in spite of Newman's increasing exasperation and unease, he can be very funny indeed when writing to Faber. At least one letter from this important episode should have been included.

As an example of the marvellously laconic abruptness with which Newman could write when he wanted, the famous letter to Monsignor Talbot ("Birmingham people have souls") is included, but several other magnificent snubs are missing. One looks in vain for the sombre, stately and superbly ambivalent amh to Cardinal Wiseman which had conveyed a wish from the dying Faber to see Newman:

My dear Lord Cardinal
I thank you Eminence for the feeling which dictated your Eminence's letter.
I am perfectly aware of the hopeless state in which Fr Faber lies. Your Eminence will be glad to know that Fr Faber has already

been informed by me, not only of my wish to see him, but of the precise time when I hope to have that sad satisfaction.

And surely the pithy letter to Manning ("I do not know whether I am on my head or my heels, when I have active relations with you. In spite of my friendly feelings, this is the judgment of my intellect") should have found a place. It is no less surprising that the splendid letter to Francis Newman on temperance has been omitted. "As to what you tell me of Archbishop Manning, I have heard that too many of our Irish bishops think that too many drink-shops are licensed. As for me, I do not know whether we have too many or too few."

On a very different note, a movingly affectionate and humble letter to W. P. Gordan, showing Newman's extreme shyness, is a little missing gem: "Many is the time I have stood over the fire at breakfast or looked at you at Recreation, hunting for something to talk about. . . . The date is 1849, an important year in Newman's life, and one that is ignored in this collection."

Although these letters I have mentioned are superior to many included (which could easily have been made room for them), Joyce Sugg's selection is a good dip into the vast correspondence and provides an attractive and useful introduction to Newman.

Owen Chadwick's slim volume on Newman in the Oxford "Past Masters" series is on the whole balanced and reliable. But the reader who is looking for a masterly essay by a master of the subject will be disappointed.

It must be said that Professor Chadwick's strangely staccato prose does not help. It produces a curiously simplistic effect, at times lapsing into banality: "In 1872 an officious verger turned him out of St Paul's Cathedral, partly because he looked shabby. (It was his 'new' coat, but had hung in his cupboard unused for a long time.) He did not mind. It seems odd to devote space to such details when there is apparently no room even to mention the early *Lectures on Justification*, Newman's greatest strictly theological work and an important landmark in ecumenical theology."

That omission is all the more surprising because this study is, if anything, too narrowly religious and theological. The whole Newman does not come across. Chadwick is at pains to emphasize the sad, sensitive, shy and solitary aspects of Newman. But he says practically nothing of the man of action and enormous practicality, who master-minded the Tractarian agitation, founded a university and public school, established a religious order in England and built several churches.

Moreover, the chapter "The Nature of Newman's Mind", which is diffuse and repetitive, completely fails to bring out the extraordinary sense of the

concrete and the obsession with the "real" in Newman. In order to understand the conversion of 1845 (which may not break an underlying continuity but which nevertheless is the pivotal point in Newman's life), one has to bring together these two elements with others, including an imagination unusually alive to analogies as well as a relentless - his former Tractarian allies called it "inexorable" - logic. Chadwick's meagre discussion of the conversion neglects both the "implicit" workings of Newman's mind and also the "first principles" which led him to Catholicism. Nor is the author very helpful about the "explicit" reasons, preferring to leave the reader with his view that the withdrawal to Littlemore, where Newman did not have to "hammer out his opinions under the scrutiny of an intellectual peer", was responsible for an "enclosed" or "solitary outlook" from which he made "strange modern inferences from a study of the Monophysites of the fifth century" and gave way to "rage about a misguided plan to push a bishop into Jerusalem."

The Anglican half of the book is less satisfactory than the Catholic half. There are too many echoes of the distant, forgotten voice of Henri Bremond's *The Mystery of Newman* (which Chadwick calls "almost a classic", while omitting all mention of Wilfrid Ward's *Life*, which still contains some of the most penetrating remarks ever made on Newman's genius). Newman is barely allowed to speak for himself, and one senses a somewhat stale dependence on past memories of reading rather than the freshness of a firsthand familiarity with the letters and works.

Newman as controversialist seems to embarrass Chadwick, who remarks somewhat archly that an "unregenerate reader may regret the growth in grace" which he professes to observe in the *Letter to the Duke of Norfolk* - "The controversialist had grown in moral stature." But as a controversialist Newman nearly has a claim to a unique place in English literature. One can hardly begin to understand Newman without paying serious and sustained attention to this dominant aspect of his life and mind.

Professor Chadwick makes some questionable assertions. He remarks confidently on Newman's personal prayer life based on actual evidence or just on Bremond's deductions from the sermons? Is "neither" of Newman's novels even "good" (not even when compared with other Victorian religious novels)? Was Newman so obviously wasting his time attacking Acbill in the virulently anti-Catholic climate of the time? *Parochial and Plain Sermons* (in eight, not six, volumes) may be "one of the great English works of moral divinity" but is it really true that Newman "never wrote better, never more powerfully, never more persuasively?"

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Demonstrative Persons

Maurice Wiles

JAMES P. MACKAY

The Christian Experience of God as Trinity

310pp. SCM Press. £7.50.
0 334 01937 0

This book is a sequel to the author's lively *Jesus, the Man and the Myth*, and is written in the same robust and expansive style. James P. Mackay begins by posing the question: is not the doctrine of the Trinity an embarrassment to Christians in their dialogue with secular humanists and in relation to any possible rapprochement with Judaism or Islam? His provisional answer is: not if it is rightly understood. But there, of course, lies the rub. For where is the place of understanding? Professor Mackay has no doubt where our search should begin. The doctrine of the Trinity is a Christological doctrine; it arises directly out of Christian reflection on the divine significance of Jesus. It is to its historical origins, particularly as recorded in scripture and patristic writings, that we need to turn for any appropriate renewal of understanding. It is to a survey of that well-worn path, therefore, that the main body of this book is devoted.

Mackay leads us through this minefield with a courage that seems at times to border on foolhardiness. In an informal, and not always very elegant, style, that coheres rather awkwardly with the precision and formality of much of the subject-matter under discussion, he surveys the most significant evidence, the patristic controversies and, more briefly, the later development of the doctrine, particularly in Aquinas, Rahner, Barth and Moltmann. The way in which the doctrine has mainly been understood is stringently criticized for its arbitrariness and its incoherence. These are old and familiar complaints, and the way in which they are here presented may tempt the specialist to dismiss them as superficial and not demanding serious attention, let alone assent. That, I believe, would be a grave and unwarrantable mistake. Mackay frequently writes in acknowledged dependence on some patristic specialist or other to guide him through the

historical thickets. But though others may be able to describe particular trees more precisely, Mackay seems to me to have a remarkably penetrating insight into the contours of the wood as a whole. It is here that the importance of the book lies.

The primary purport of his discussion of the New Testament is that the use of pre-existence language by the New Testament writers is not intended by any of them (even the fourth evangelist) to indicate the existence of a pre-existent person or "hypostasis" who became Jesus of Nazareth by taking on human nature. I suspect he slightly overstates his case—only slightly and its main thrust is both valid and important. Similarly he understands the way the Spirit is spoken of as a way of bringing out the status and function of Jesus end at no point (not even with Johannine talk of the Paraclete) implying the existence of a divine person or "hypostasis". If all this is so, and I think he is generally in the right though the issues are (and no doubt will remain) controversial, what gives rise to the changed understanding of later trinitarianism?

Here Mackay stresses the overriding influence of the emanationist approach of so much contemporary Greek thought with its hierarchical conception of lesser divine hypostases spanning the gap between the immutable god of Platonic theology and the phenomenal world. This, in Mackay's view, was the dominant motif of all pre-Nicene trinitarian reflection. Arius brought things to a head not because he was more philosophically oriented than his predecessors, but because of his more determined, but inevitably unsuccessful, attempt to do justice to the soteriological significance of Jesus within this framework. The orthodox rejection of the Arian account was justified, but the orthodox did not break free enough from the presuppositions which both sides shared to put forward a viable alternative. By holding on to the idea of the three divine hypostases (which really belong to an emanationist view and not to the New Testament) but raising them to the fully divine realm of eternity, it in practice severed the links of the gospel with history and thereby undermined (unintentionally) the centrality of Jesus for Christian faith. In addition, the attempts to extend the approach begun in terms of Father and Son to a

third person of the Spirit only served to reinforce the unsatisfactory nature of that way of dealing with the problem.

Despite roughnesses in his account, I believe Mackay's understanding of what was involved in trinitarian development is much nearer the mark than traditional orthodox claims that Athanasius and those who followed after him found a religious and philosophically satisfactory answer to the very real problems for Christian reflection about the godhead, posed by the figure of Jesus and made acute by Arius. But if so, how are we to recover that true understanding of the Trinity to which Mackay aspires? Clearly something much more than refining the sense of the word "person" to avoid tritheistic misunderstanding is called for. The crucial thing for Mackay is that the doctrine be reclaimed from its ahistorical and theoretical setting and firmly linked to history and praxis. Here Mackay has sympathy with Moltmann's work, particularly his emphasis on the suffering of God. But he criticizes Moltmann for regarding the initiatory character of God's dealings with the world as reflecting a parallel trinitarian history within God himself. We need, Mackay insists, to abandon the will-o'-the-wisp of trying to draw distinctions between our economic and an immanent trinity, insistence on a purely economic trinity does not rule out the possibility that there may be some form of self-differentiation within God, but it acknowledges our inability to speak about it. What we can speak of is, as the book's title suggests, the Christian experience of God as Trinity.

Here again Mackay's exposition of what is called for seems to me entirely along the right line. But its execution in his final section of constructive suggestions does not quite live up to the hopes raised by the earlier analysis. The loose structure of the prose, now freed from its anchorage to historical discussion, becomes increasingly apparent and is not helped by importations from phenomenology like "the project towards the world that we are". And this is matched by the looseness of the theological position being outlined — a description not necessarily to be regarded as an adverse criticism of that position. The primary function of doctrine is described as a demonstrative one. It points to those places where we can encounter God in specifically Christian experience. Language of Son and Spirit point particularly to Jesus and to the eucharistic community. In this respect it is claimed to be a far more appropriate response to modern secular humanism than the approach of natural theology or reflections on the "limits of human experience, for (as Mackay criticizes) such help to remind us it is in the recognition of divine power actually experienced rather than in abstract reflection that God is to be known. Those two approaches seem to me to be unnecessarily contrasted with one another (as they too often are), in a way that if accepted would involve a very serious weakening of both. But with that reservation Mackay's emphasis on the demonstrative role of trinitarian language seems to me to be valuable.

But can it really be claimed that what we are offered is a recovery of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity? Two features of Mackay's position incline me to give a negative answer. In the first place, as he himself says, the significant point of the doctrine as he expounds it could just as well be made by some form of Unitarian doctrine as by a trinitarian one. Secondly, it is questionable whether one can properly speak of a doctrine of the Trinity if one does not believe oneself in a position to speak at all about whatever self-differentiation within God there might be. I would prefer to speak of the task to which the book points as one of finding the most appropriate use of the traditional trinitarian symbols. Perhaps there is no substantial difference between those two descriptions, but the latter would better indicate the measure and the character of the discontinuity with the main tradition which Mackay's proposals involve. I believe that the direction which Mackay indicates is indeed the direction in which trinitarian thought needs to be developed and I hope the book will encourage others to pursue it further.

Higher than high

Stewart R. Sutherland

JOHN MACQUARRIE

In Search of Humanity: A Theological and Philosophical Approach

280pp. SCM Press. £8.50.
0 334 00688 0

To have been young, and then to grow older, and finally to die, is a very mediocre form of human existence; this merit belongs to every animal.

If men had forgotten what it means to exist religiously, they had doubtless also forgotten what it means to exist as human beings; this must therefore be set forth.

These two remarks from Kierkegaard set the scale of the task which faces the Christian theologian. On the one hand the roots and justification of the claim that there is a metaphysical distinctiveness about human beings must be subject to continuing scrutiny and reassessment lest it degenerate into religiously ungrounded dogmatism that makes man the measure of all things. On the other hand, if our Christian teaching does point towards what is true then it will carry implications for what has variously been called our doctrine of man, or our anthropology. If, to use Kierkegaard's terms, it is possible "to exist religiously", then this will profoundly affect our understanding of what it is "to exist as human beings".

In more theologically self-confident times, some would have accepted this as the cue to elaborate, under the heading "The Doctrine of Man", the accumulated wisdom of the tradition or the denigration on the subject of human beings. This has been less true of the Anglican tradition than some others, and the tentative and partly empirical approach which has persisted there is in many ways more suited to the exploratory mood of theological enquiry as it is practised today. John Macquarrie offers us an excellent example of such a theological enquiry in a book whose character shows itself in the title *In Search of Humanity*. The theologian is here participant in the seminar rather than preacher in academic robe.

None the less, in these days, one must quickly acknowledge that Professor Macquarrie's theology in this book brings a distinctive voice to the seminar. There is no slide towards a reductionist view of man; nor is there evidence of amateur sociology replacing theological reflection. At its best the book is an exploration of ideas in theological and philosophical, schooled by insights won by the professionals in the fields of the biological and social sciences.

At first glance the table of contents suggests a series of essays clustered on the theme of human nature — freedom, egoity, cognition, language, conscience, belief, love, death, hope etc. This is deceptive, for these themes and as many again are embedded in a structure of argument and a method of enquiry which are firm without being obtrusive. Macquarrie exemplifies admirably the opening remark of his preface: "the best approach to many of the problems of theology and philosophy is through the study of our humanity". The structure of the argument is quite crucial and the key is to be found in the respective titles of the first and last chapters, "Becoming" and "Being". Humanity is something which in one sense we all have, and in another, something towards which we may aspire. Our nature is both what we are and what we might become. Hence we are most at home with "Becoming", for that is the basis for understanding what our "Being" is. Read in this light, the treatment of each theme is partly a report, empirically based, but partly a vision of what we might be.

Macquarrie has no illusions about our capacity to use and misuse our nature. Our "embodiedness", for example, can be a source of strength or weakness; we can "make love", or we can merely copulate. "Belief" gives form to our lives but "history is full of examples of people and even whole nations who were destroyed by false and sometimes cruel beliefs". The possibilities of weakness and sickness,

however, are not permitted to obscure the possibilities of strength and health.

Of course the dangers or risks are even greater if we deal with theological dimensions of human life, or if we raise philosophical questions about whether or how human nature shows indications of what transcends the limits of empirical investigation. This is the very heart of the search upon which Macquarrie is engaged. His insistence throughout is that the methods and conclusions of empiricism are important but limited. Genuine empirical investigation, which is a method and not an ideology, will tell us much that is true about our humanity but it will not tell us the whole truth. Macquarrie points out that a whole battery of prima-facie secular as well as religious philosophies (Nietzsche, Sartre, Marx, as well as Lonergan and Marcel) argue the importance of the "idea of transcendence" — as applied to the human being. On the one hand this emphasis is not an affirmation based solely in empirical enquiry in any one of these cases, and on the other it is, Macquarrie claims, compatible with Christian teaching about a transcendent God.

If I do have some reservations about this important book, they are most apparent here. Macquarrie's great facility with ideas and the history of ideas has a bewitching effect on the reader. The tone and style is so calm and reasonable that one almost wonders why this is an area of such explosive disagreement. It is not that the case for the opposition is left unstated. Quite to the contrary: one reads here of Marcuse, Sartre, Bloch, Freud, Nietzsche, quite as often as of Schleiermacher, Otto and Thomas Aquinas. Rather the tension and profundity of the disagreements seem to have been massaged into fluidity by a prose whose very dexterity manipulates us into acquiescence and intellectual passivity. Thus too easily may we be persuaded to overlook the question which Sartre and Marcel might have pressed in response to Macquarrie's expositions of their thought; too quickly might we forget the fact that Nietzsche would refuse to accept the conclusions of this particular search for humanity.

In all reasonableness the author might reply that he never fails to state where the disagreements lie, and that competence in exposition and fluent use of prose hardly constitute serious criticisms. Undoubtedly so, and I must give at least one specific example of where the reader might unwittingly fail to appreciate the complexity of what is at stake. In his interesting appeal to the philosophers whom I have already mentioned, all of whom "are agreed on the importance of transcendence", Macquarrie raises the question of whether all this is compatible with the idea of the transcendence of God. Within three pages he summarizes quite brilliantly a number of the more recent theology which suggest that it might be possible to speak of the transcendent reality "as the god of human transcendence". This is the basis of his claim that there is a contradiction in believing that God is both transcendent and immanent. However, the firmness of this assertion is not matched by firmness of supporting argument.

In one book there can only be limited achievement, and the demands of a reviewer are often unreasonable. My demand, however, is not for a summa in each chapter, but for a greater turbulence in the prose and in the exposition. Only thus will the reader be aware that at points he has left the calmer waters of scholarly exposition to shoot the rapids of philosophical analysis.

The book ends with the outline of what Job Macquarrie calls "the anthropological argument for the existence of God". Here the author is at his cumulative, scholarly and systematic best, condensing into a few pages the outline of a natural theology for the twentieth century. I hope, indeed, that the only valid procedure for his remarks will not, I hope, hide the fact that "the only valid procedure for forming such a concept [of God] is that 'the only valid procedure for creating things' — in this case the human being, the highest known created thing — as inferior forms of that which is supremely excellent form, possessing the divine nature" (my italics).

In the corridors of the Kremlin

Archie Brown

ROY MEDVEDEV

Translated by Brian Pearce
280pp. Oxford Blackwell. £9.50.
0 192 933 6

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280pp. Macmillan. £15.
0 033 32281 9

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280pp. Cambridge University Press.
0 521 23377 1

RONALD AMANN and JULIAN
COOPER (Editors)

Industrial Innovation in the Soviet
Union
280pp. Yale University Press. £30.
0 30 02722 9

At first glance the Soviet system looks complicated. There are so many bureaucratic hierarchies, so many party and state institutions with overlapping responsibilities. At second glance (or, perhaps more precisely, after a year or so's study) it begins to look simple. Just as Bagehot distinguished the "efficient" from the "dignified" parts of "The English Constitution", so it becomes very easy to distinguish "efficient" party institutions from "dignified" soviet institutions, the power of the Politburo from the more formal authority of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet or (if it is to earn a mention at all) the Presidium of the Council of Ministers.

What the second look takes in is not entirely an optical illusion. The Politburo is the most powerful political institution within the Soviet Union. At every level of the Soviet hierarchy party institutions enjoy a superior authority to state institutions and it is the former which must sanction new policy departures. Departments of the Central Committee apparatus wield great de facto power within the system and, generally speaking (though with some significant exceptions), a minister is less powerful than the head of the Central Committee department which oversees his ministry.

Yet a still closer look at the Soviet system shows that ministries also wield substantial day-to-day powers, and it is clear that the Presidium of the Council of Ministers takes a number of significant economic decisions of an obligatory nature, even if the ultimate court of appeal remains the Politburo. More prolonged scrutiny also shows that the distribution of power between various party and governmental organs has varied considerably over time, that at any given moment the degree of diffusion of influence over policy varies markedly from one policy area to another, and that no two General Secretaries have adopted the same leadership style or achieved precisely the same power relationship vis-à-vis the Politburo.

Indeed, that relationship has also changed within each incumbency. While Stalin, Khrushchev and Brezhnev all differed greatly from each other, the powers wielded in the earliest years of their leadership. A case in point is his entry in the *Bolshevik rosyetkaya* (Orel Soviet Encyclopedia) — Volume 24, published in 1976 — which accords Stalin 34 columns inches and tries to effect a compromise between the views of those who held him in high esteem and those who regarded him as a disaster. In contrast, in Volume 26 (published two years later) of the same major Soviet encyclopedia,

Yury Andropov, in turn, has already adopted a leadership style which humiliates him from his predecessors. One feature of it has been the publication in *Pravda* and other Soviet newspapers of weekly commentaries on what has been

discussed in the Politburo. These are obviously very selective, but the publication of even a part of the Politburo agenda within two days of the meeting is something new. While the Andropov leadership's strong emphasis on the need for greater discipline within Soviet society may seem more like an echo of the Stalin era, and one welcomed as such by those who are nostalgic for those years (or, at least, for what their selective memory calls to mind of them), there is no reason to suppose that Andropov shares their nostalgia.

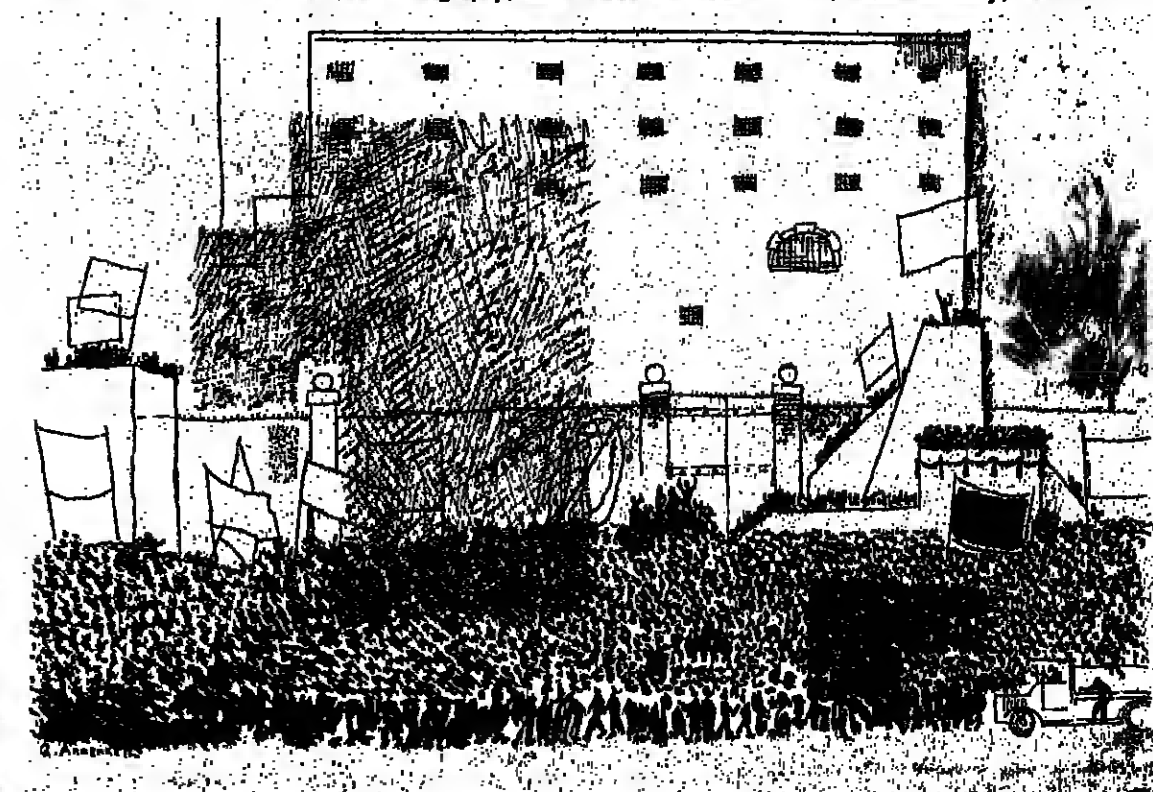
One question which may well be reopened, now that there is no longer a single member of the Politburo which deposed Khrushchev in October 1964 still in office, is that of the place

Khrushchev is accorded a mere 3½ columns inches in which to do the bare outlines of his career is appended only one evaluative sentence. The judgement is laconic and exclusively negative: "Manifestations of subjectivism and voluntarism had a place in his work."

Roy Medvedev, whose numerous other translated writings include two volumes which document many of the atrocities of the Stalin era, is not prepared to accept such a one-sided verdict in his new biography, *Khrushchev*. For Medvedev, the evil for which Stalin was responsible clearly outweighed any possible good he might have done. It is Khrushchev — not Stalin — who needs a "balanced" biography, one in which the extent to

did was just this — that they were able to get rid of me simply by voting, whereas Stalin would have had them all arrested.

Probably the most important part of the new material which Medvedev makes available is the substance of the indictment read out by Mikhail Suslov to the Central Committee session which removed Khrushchev from his posts. Suslov, who (along with Aleksandr Shelepin), was, Medvedev tells us, the prime mover in the organization of Khrushchev's dismissal, apparently brought fifteen charges against him which are listed by Medvedev and acknowledged by him to contain, in virtually every case, some truth, even if not the whole truth. Yet, understandably, Medvedev is



"The Storming of the Winter Palace" (1919-20) by Yuri Annenkov. This illustration, reproduced by courtesy of Fischer Fine Art, is included in *All the Empty Palaces: The Merchant Patrons of Modern Art in Pre-Revolutionary Russia* by Beverly Whitney Kean (342pp. Barrie and Jenkins 0 09 147980 0).

Khrushchev is to be accorded in official Soviet history. Indeed, a step towards his official rehabilitation (even if it is unlikely to go beyond qualified approval) would appear already to have been taken. In the first issue of 1983 of the journal of the party's Central Committee, *Kommunist*, General D. Lelyushenko provides a more than usually objective account of the battle of Stalingrad (though he finishes up by drawing the lesson that the Soviet Union must strengthen its military preparedness in the present "uneasy international atmosphere"). In this article, "Victory on the Volga", he not only refers several times to Stalin, but on four occasions to Khrushchev. Though there is no elaboration of the part played by Khrushchev, the way in which he is named as one of the leading figures — he was a political officer with the rank of Lieutenant General — on the Stalingrad front and by clear implication, therefore, someone who should share in the credit for the historic victory of the Soviet forces in that battle. (The same *Kommunist* article provides an at least equally rare, though passing, mention of Georgy Malenkov, who was Khrushchev's main rival for the Soviet leadership in the immediate post-Stalin years.)

Under Brezhnev, Khrushchev's memory fared worse than Stalin's. Stalin was rarely mentioned, but official assessments of him attempted to preserve a balance between "positive" and "negative" features of his leadership. A case in point is his entry in the *Bolshevik rosyetkaya* (Orel Soviet Encyclopedia) — Volume 24, published in 1976 — which accords Stalin 34 columns inches and tries to effect a compromise between the views of those who held him in high esteem and those who regarded him as a disaster. In contrast, in Volume 26 (published two years later) of the same major Soviet encyclopedia,

Medvedev, who writes in difficult circumstances in Moscow, published an earlier work on Khrushchev (*Khrushchev: The Years in Power*, Oxford, 1976) of which his twin brother, Zhores, who lives in exile in Britain, was co-author. That book was disproportionately concerned with Khrushchev's agricultural policy, and Medvedev's latest work not only provides a more comprehensive survey of Khrushchev's years at the top, but gives a short account of his path to the leadership and provides a still briefer, but interesting, epilogue on his years of enforced retirement under close police surveillance.

Though there is not a great deal that is new for anyone familiar with the Western literature on Khrushchev, Medvedev succeeds in providing a fair and reliable account of his merits and demerits and with just enough new material to make this the most useful biography of the former Soviet leader currently available. It is made clear that Medvedev was given some help by members of Khrushchev's family, and several of the most piquant observations evidently came from such sources. Thus, we learn that on the day on which he was removed from the leadership of the party and government, he arrived home in the evening, threw his briefcase into a corner of the room, and said:

"Well, that's it. I'm retired now. Perhaps the most important thing I should do is to write my memoirs."

Brezhnev's book is quite effective in illuminating some of the "areas of debate" in domestic policy-making, mainly through reading between the lines of leaders' speeches, and he has interesting observations to make not only on the different political styles of Khrushchev and Brezhnev, but on the policy differences and relative coolness between Brezhnev and Kosygin. He might usefully have employed as

further evidence to support this last point the way Brezhnev and the Soviet mass media reacted to Kosygin's resignation and to his subsequent death. Though Kosygin died on December 18, 1980, his *Pravda* obituary did not appear until December 21 and the big front-page story for *Pravda* on December 19 was that this was Brezhnev's seventy-fourth birthday.

The main problem, however, with Breslaue's book is that while particular areas of policy can be studied in isolation from others, one cannot on that basis go on to generalize meaningfully about how a General Secretary builds up his power and authority. Breslaue quite explicitly concentrates on "some of the central issues of Soviet domestic politics" and leaves out of account the General Secretary's role in dealing with other Communist countries, with Western states and with the outside world generally. This is a strange procedure when one is dealing with the authority of a leader of a superpower.

Would anyone attempt to discuss the rise and fall of former President Jimmy Carter's authority without considering the impact on it of the Camp David accords, of the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan and of the Iranian crisis and the holding of American diplomats hostage in Tehran? Hardly. Yet foreign policy bulks still larger in the Soviet than in the American public mind. The extent to which the Second World War was fought on Soviet soil (and the scale of Soviet losses in that war) is sufficient in itself to explain such a preoccupation, even though it is not the whole of the explanation.

Khrushchev's relations with Western and Third World leaders, the crises in Hungary and Poland in 1956, the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 and even the Soviet leader's shoe-banging interruption of Harold Macmillan at the United Nations all need to be fitted into an analysis of the rise and fall of Khrushchev's authority. The extent, moreover, to which he devoted himself to foreign policy and to visits abroad ultimately put more power than he could have wished (including the power to remove him) in the hands of those he left minding the shop.

For Brezhnev, the impact of events abroad on his domestic authority was, if anything, even more crucial. The radical reforms which got under way in Czechoslovakia in 1968 naturally made him the principal spokesman for the Soviet position since this was, in the first instance, a crisis in inter-party relations and Brezhnev was General Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party. It began a process, which was to become more pronounced from the beginning of the 1970s, whereby Brezhnev devoted an increasing amount of time to foreign policy and in which his authority and prestige depended as much upon diplomatic successes and failures as upon domestic policy. The two were, in any case, closely interlinked.

Even the dilution and virtual abandonment of the Kosygin economic reform of 1965, which (as Breslaue rightly notes) took place particularly in 1968 and 1969, cannot be adequately understood without reference to events in Czechoslovakia. The fact that economic reform in Czechoslovakia, a more radical version of the type of reform which Kosygin had been seeking, was accompanied by drastic and from a Soviet standpoint, dangerous political change in that country undermined the position of those in the Soviet Union who wanted to make even modest steps in the direction of economic decentralization and greater use of the market. The lesson drawn (rightly or wrongly) was that there was a logical connection between this kind of economic reform and the undermining of the "leading role" of the party. Such a perception also strengthened Brezhnev's authority vis-à-vis that of Kosygin. By devoting only two out of 292 pages of his text to "the international context", Breslaue unfortunately misses this and other relevant points which follow from the Soviet Union's superpower status and role, without consideration of which a truly convincing analysis of

Devoutly divided

Douglas Hetherington

ERIC GALLAGHER and STANLEY WORRALL

Christians in Ulster 1968-1980
241pp. Oxford University Press. £10.
0 19 21337 7

The conflict in Northern Ireland has particular causes which are not discoverable in the experience of other civilized states, and there is much evidence to show that it is not one in which two sides — both devoutly Christian but of different denominations, fight for religious reasons. Indeed, on the principle of a united Ireland the Churches stand with the rest of the country's institutions, such as the banks and the trade unions; they are organized on a national basis and recognize no border or partition in their structure and activities.

In Northern Ireland, as Eric Gallagher and Stanley Worrall, both distinguished Methodists, demonstrate

with detail in their prologue to *Christians in Ulster 1968-1980*, ecumenism made more progress in the early 1960s than elsewhere and intensified its efforts as growing tragedy overtook two communities still as acutely separated politically as they are religiously. The leaders of the various Churches — except only the Revd Ian Paisley — have responded as best they could. Their failure to bring about peace, or at least to abate violence, has lessons for Churches everywhere, where is a Church to stand on political issues if to meditate is to be two-faced?

Were Ireland to find peace, it would be possible to say how much the Churches had helped in its attainment. In particular instances the clergy have, individually and collectively, acted, as the authors show, with courage and compassion and had some success. But most of the time sectarianism prevails. The Christian solution, the ministry of reconciliation, has not worked in a devout country. "The Churches in Northern Ireland are themselves part of the problem. Put crudely, they have to save themselves before they can save society."

But can it really be claimed that what we are offered is a recovery of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity? Two features of Mackay's position incline me to give a negative answer. In the first place, as he himself says, the significant point of the doctrine as he expounds it could just as well be made by some form of Unitarian doctrine as by a trinitarian one. Secondly, it is questionable whether one can properly speak of a doctrine of the Trinity if one does not believe oneself in a position to speak at all about whatever self-differentiation within God there might be. I would prefer to speak of the task to which the book points as one of finding the most appropriate use of the traditional trinitarian symbols. Perhaps there is no substantial difference between those two descriptions, but the latter would better indicate the measure and the character of the discontinuity with the main tradition which Mackay's proposals involve. I believe that the direction which Mackay indicates is indeed the direction in which trinitarian thought needs to be developed and I hope the book will encourage others to pursue it further.

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"solidarity-building" by Soviet top leaders cannot be achieved.

The two books by John Löwenhardt are each good examples of their kind. No claim is made by the author that any significant new information about the top collective Soviet decision-making body is to be found in *The Soviet Politburo*. What he rightly claims to have done is to bring together the quite considerable amount of information about the origins, workings and membership of that body which has hitherto remained scattered. This is a well-translated and also updated version of a book previously published in Dutch. It will be found useful by students but should also interest a wider readership.

Löwenhardt again displays his talent for synthesis in his *Decision Making in Soviet Politics*, but here additionally he includes some of his own research in Soviet sources. He presents ten case-studies of the making of policy in the Soviet Union, nine of them consisting mainly of summaries of work conducted by others on issues ranging from family law reform and the introduction of governmental tort liability to prevention of pollution of lakes and rivers and the decision to allow substantial Jewish emigration. On this basis, he is able to form some useful generalizations and hypotheses about Soviet policy-making which he proceeds to test in a substantial case-study of his own, the reorganization of the USSR Academy of Sciences - an issue which was hotly disputed from the time it was mooted in 1954 until its implementation in 1961.

What Löwenhardt shows is that in most areas of policy the initial moves to get an item placed on the political agenda in the broad sense (and ultimately, and more specifically, on the Politburo agenda, if the decision involved is deemed important enough by the party leadership) come from outside the ranks of the leadership - often from specialists or from "policy coalitions" (or from what I would prefer to call, using a term which Hugh Heclo has applied in the study of American politics, "issue networks"). Löwenhardt also introduces the useful notion of "political entrepreneurship" to describe the kind of individual within the Soviet system who has the enterprise and determination to initiate issues and to try to get them recognized as problems requiring new solutions by those in positions of political authority.

It is quite clear that those who work within the system in the Soviet Union by definition work within certain limits. What is not always so fully appreciated is that policies change and the limits of the permissible change as a result of the initiatives of individuals and the advocacy of opinion groups within the networks of specialists without whose help the top party and government leadership would scarcely be in a position to govern. The power of the highest party organs and the controls exercised by party bodies more generally are fundamental features of Soviet reality, but so, interestingly, is influence from below.

It can, of course, be argued that the political leadership in every system requires its specialists "on tap" and that so long as the latter are not "on top" nothing much is necessarily signified. In the Soviet case, however, there is a vast difference between the kind of specialists whom Stalin relied on - who were frequently specialists, often more Stalinist than Stalin and who, each in their own speciality, suppressed all heterodox thought - and those who have been coming to the fore in the post-Stalin period. Though the arch-charlatan, Trofim Lysenko, succeeded in pulling the wool over the eyes of Khrushchev as well as of Stalin and did not lose his enormous influence until after Khrushchev's removal, and though in some of the more "ideological" areas Stalin appointees are to this day forces to be reckoned with, a great deal of serious argument now takes place among Soviet specialists within virtually every discipline and much of it is published in academic journals and books, with the debate at times spilling over into newspapers.

Further useful evidence of this is provided in *Thane Gustafson's Reform in Soviet Politics: Lessons of recent policies on land and water*. Gustafson's own research concentrates on Soviet agricultural and conservation policy, but, like Löwenhardt, he is interested in the broader question of how policy is

made in the Soviet Union and, not least, in how issues get on to the political agenda. It is careful not to play down the control over access to positions of influence and over what can be published which the party leadership possesses. But he notes the "evidence from many different fields that the scope and quality of specialists' advice to policy makers... have increased" and observes how new ideas and new fields of study gradually catch on in the Soviet Union.

Not only influence from below but inertia on the part of subordinate institutions and officials means that the party leadership's control over Soviet society is not as total as some of those who view the Soviet Union as totalitarian are inclined to imagine. Gustafson points out that while "the power of the party leaders to make key decisions" is unquestioned, the success of the programmes they sponsor depends upon a host of smaller decisions and, indeed, non-decisions. In the process of which policies may be not only adjusted and refined but also diverted, obstructed and eroded.

Bureaucratic inertia appears, too, as one of the themes of the impressively thorough study of *Industrial Innovation in the Soviet Union* conducted by a team of scholars based mainly in Birmingham University, whose findings are edited by Ronald Amann and Julian Cooper. Amann and Cooper themselves are the authors of important chapters and their strong team of contributors includes David Holloway on innovation in the defence sector. Even in that privileged and

relatively successful sector of the Soviet economy, Holloway finds some reluctance to innovate within "a bureaucratic structure which requires a major effort from the top to point the executives in a new direction and which, once directed on a particular course, shows considerable inertia".

In the economy as a whole, Amann suggests, a major source of conservatism "lies in the central decision-making process itself". As he put it: "Because the basic production units of the economy have neither the power nor, in many cases, the inclination to make major innovation decisions, the full weight of responsibility rests on the shoulders of industrial ministries and the central planning agencies. But the latter see several stages removed from the detailed requirements of their subordinate enterprises; moreover, there must inevitably be a gulf between the huge mass of innovation opportunities and the inherent incapacity of the centre to acquaint itself with these opportunities let alone to subject them to critical evaluation. Delays, indecisiveness, 'long and fruitless discussions', buck-passing and mistaken decisions are often the result."

If the ministries and planning agencies mentioned by Amann have, indeed, great power (though inadequate information), the highest party organs possess still greater powers and authority. The capacity of

General Secretaries to give a lead and the powers of the Politburo collectively are enormous. They seem especially great in comparison with the highest executive organs in the other superpower, where the President and his Cabinet secretaries can be thwarted by Congress, by the Supreme Court, by the press, and ultimately, by the electorate. No General Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party is likely to have sleepless nights over the prospect of being criticized or frustrated by the corresponding bodies in the USSR. But constraints on the General Secretary personally there certainly are in the post-Stalin era, even though he has considerably more political resources at his disposal than anyone else in the country. And though the Politburo collectively can set Soviet policies on a different course, the extent to which it embodies different institutional interests (in a process of mutual accommodation which in Brezhnev's time, unlike Khrushchev's, became sufficiently cosy for some observers to describe the Soviet system as "corporatist") means that radical policy innovation occurs less often in practice than it might be expected to occur in principle.

Now that economic difficulties have come to be perceived within the Soviet Union as much more serious than in earlier decades when there was, at least, relatively rapid growth, the question of how fresh ideas get a hearing and a chance of implementation within the system has become a more pointed one for the Soviet political establishment as well as

for foreign scholars. While specialists exert an increasing influence in many areas of policy and different views contend within the various issue networks, on the central issue of economic reform there has been a major way in which change can come about is when a new General Secretary makes use of his authority (even though that is subject to constraints) to bring about changes in the composition of the Politburo and Secretariat and within the ministerial network. The balance of power between individuals and between institutions is not fixed for all time and changes within the leadership have the associated significance that different specialists with different ideas are given the kind of access which allows them to increase their influence.

The Soviet system is no longer simple, if it ever was. Nor is it immutable. We need to pay attention to what has changed within the system as well as to what has not changed. And we also need to understand the various obstacles to change as well as the power which is concentrated in the hands of the top party leadership collectively. The question of the relationship between new leaders and new policies and the broader questions of how issues get on to the political agenda and of who participates in the policy-making process are important and topical ones. In varying degrees, the books reviewed here make a real contribution to advancement of that knowledge, but much remains to be done.

Washington and Bonn twenty years ago is strikingly similar to that of the more recent frictions, and it is to be hoped that Stent's conclusions are being digested in Washington.

Again, although she concludes that increased economic dealings between Germany and the Soviet Union are unlikely to have much direct bearing on their political relationship, a greater degree of economic interdependence would enhance the importance of détente for both sides. This is a point where more clarification would have been welcome: if détente is not "political", what is?

At a time when the Western alliance is more divided than ever about the commercial, military and political dimensions of East-West relations, and when the rule of the Federal Republic is under scrutiny as never before, Professor Stent's book sheds a welcome beam of light on a central aspect of the subject.

archives), all of these four variants have been attempted by Bonn or by Moscow at different times. The normal pattern has been for Bonn to seek to use the Soviet Union's economic dependence to win political concessions, and for Moscow to attempt to gain economic benefits through political leverage. The story goes through many variations, from Adenauer's resolute attempt to wield economic sanctions (in line with American policy) to the effective decoupling of economics and politics by Brandt's *Ostpolitik*. One of the many interesting conclusions drawn by Stent is that although some trade-offs have proved possible when the stakes on both sides were symmetrical and relatively modest (e.g. German trade concessions against the return of prisoners-of-war from Russia), any attempt to modify Soviet foreign policy by means of economic sanctions has proved abortive: the pattern of the steel pipeline controversy between

practised: the withholding of economic benefits in pursuit of political goals (e.g. Western economic sanctions in order to modify Soviet behaviour in Afghanistan); the positive use of economic inducements to achieve political goals (West German granting of trade credits in exchange for Soviet acceptance of Bonn's links with West Berlin); a politically offensive strategy aimed at changing an adversary's economic policies (Soviet pressure on West Berlin to achieve a more favourable trade treaty with Bonn); or finally, political concessions aimed at procuring a change in economic policies (the release of German nationals from the Soviet Union in exchange for trade concessions).

As the author proceeds to demonstrate in her scholarly survey of the period from the 1950s to the 1980s (based on a wide range of German and Soviet sources, and some fascinating unpublished American diplomatic

Bolsheviks bested

J. Ciechanowski

ADAM ZAMOYSKI

The Battle for the Marchlands
218pp. Columbia University Press.
£11.65.
0 914710 82 6

Tensions between the Russians and the Poles are nothing new; for centuries they fought with each other for mastery over Eastern Europe, the key to which was control of the Marchlands - Byelorussia and Ukraine - the area between ethnic Poland and ethnic Russia where Poles and Russians mixed with Lithuanians, Byelorussians and Ukrainians.

The Russo-Polish war of 1920 was, as Adam Zamoyski forcefully reminds us in *The Battle for the Marchlands*, a dramatic and spectacular eruption of this age-long struggle. In the years 1919-20 Pilsudski tried with "gun in hand" as he himself put it, to detach Byelorussia and Ukraine from a weakened and defeated Russia and to link them federally with resurgent Poland. Pilsudski was not concerned with the destruction of communism. Indeed, he preferred to deal with the Bolsheviks, rather than the Whites, whom he regarded as implacable enemies of Polish independence. His plans failed because the Byelorussians and Ukrainians refused to consider the Poles as liberators.

Professor Stent sets out a systematic classification of four main types of strategy which might in theory be

The Polish campaign in the Marchlands was followed by a powerful Soviet counter-offensive which brought the Russians to the very gates of Warsaw. Zamoyski gives us a lucid and objective account of this campaign and establishes how, why and by whom the Russians were finally defeated. They acted on the false assumption that their march on Warsaw would trigger off a "proletarian revolution" in Poland and subsequently Germany and that the Polish "bourgeois" army was no match for the revolutionary forces. Zamoyski rightly stresses that Pilsudski was the main architect of the Polish victory, achieved by exploiting the Soviets' inability to concentrate their troops at the right points and co-ordinate their advances.

Zamoyski also rightly claims that although Pilsudski won a military victory, he suffered a resounding political defeat as the territorial settlement reached in Riga in 1921 spelled the ruin of his plans to create a confederation of new states friendly to Poland in Eastern Europe. The Riga agreement, whereby the Poles and the Russians once again simply divided Byelorussia and Ukraine between themselves, was a temporary expedient rather than a lasting settlement of the problems of the Marchlands; it came to an end, of course, in September 1939.

Pilsudski's victory, however, safeguarded Poland's newly regained independence, confined Soviet

Communism to Russia and helped to preserve the Versailles system. Regrettably, Zamoyski writes very little about the impact of this war and its consequences on internal developments either in Poland or the USSR - developments which in the Soviet Union contributed to the establishment of Stalinism, and a Poland to that of the *Sanacja* led by his followers, who regarded Russia as their main enemy and tended to underestimate the German threat.

The Community of States: A Study in International Political Theory (1980). Allen and Unwin. £15.00. 0 04 320151 9. Edited by James Mayall. It is divided into three parts. Part One examines the contemporary order. Part Two discusses the practical attempts of statesmen, lawyers, strategists and economists to devise a morally defensible international politics on the basis of interest. Part Three challenges the conventional morality of states from five alternative standpoints: Kantian morality, a reconsideration of the contemporary relevance of natural law, an examination of the concept of responsibility in international politics, and an analysis of the role of language in the development of communities. The contributors, who include Cornelia Navari, Brian Porter, Brian Paskin, Zdenek Kavran, Peter Domalan, Christopher Breyer, and Alan F. Butler, Moorhead Butler and Alan F. Butler, are members of the International Political Theory Group.

ORIENTAL ART

Emperors' exhibits

Margaret Medley

WANG GO WENG and YANG BODA (Editors)

The Palace Museum, Peking: Treasures of the Forbidden City
210pp. with colour and black-and-white illustrations. Orbis. £30.
0 85013 456 2

In the last few years a number of rather sparsely illustrated guides to China and its art have been published. At first sight *The Palace Museum, Peking: Treasures of the Forbidden City* would appear to be another, but not so. It is a substantial volume, admirably illustrated with pictures of the Palace, of the objects in the collections, and of each additional material from archaeological sites that have become famous in the last thirty years, as well as from the great Buddhist cave sites of Dunhuang, Yungang and Longmen. The clear intention is to stimulate interest in the history of the visual arts and architecture in China by drawing on the resources of the Palace Museum, each chapter being written by a specialist on the Museum staff. One of the book's interesting features is the bibliography, not so much for what it includes but rather for what it does not include; it appears to be based on the literature actually available in the Museum Library, and there are some surprising omissions, not the least being Sir Harry Garner's standard work on *Chinese Enamels and on Lacquer*. None the less the coverage appears relatively up-to-date and there is generous reference in the notes to recent Chinese periodical literature on art and technology.

After a general introduction on the use of China by Yang Boda, the specialists in the various departments contribute chapters on interesting subjects: ceramics, bronzes, paintings and calligraphy, sculpture, jade, the minor arts and, surprisingly, gold and gems. The most valuable chapters are those on architecture and on

painting and calligraphy. The former deals with the total plan of the Forbidden City in its setting as well as with the major buildings that comprise this huge, carefully organized complex. The meticulous calculation of spaces in relation to buildings, as well as that of the buildings to each other, especially those along the main north-south axis, is carefully explained. Order and balance are maintained in the planning of the minor groupings to east and west of the main axis, and this establishes a harmony that is a notable feature in both the formal public buildings and those of the private residences. The author of this chapter also recounts the background to the planning of certain sections and the purposes for which they were built, such as the building and refurbishing by Qianlong at the end of the eighteenth century of the Ningshou-gong, "Repose and Longevity Palace", for his retirement after abdication in 1795.

Painting and calligraphy, both enormously attractive subjects, are dealt with in a long essay with admirable illustrations in both colour and black-and-white, the latter being particularly appropriate to the calligraphy, of which there are some magnificent examples of the *caoshu* or cursive script in which rhythms are interwoven in a fugal complexity. The details of the long scrolls of such masters as Huang Tingjian (1049-1105) and Zhao Mengfu (1254-1322) are particularly striking, the former characterized by great strength and rhythmic control and the latter by a regular marching beat of greater formality.

The other chapters each have their special merits, though in the ceramics chapter no distinction is made between the elegant *temuzoku* of north China and the ware of Jian. There are also one or two questionable datings, especially of the popular Cizhou wares. On the use of cobalt blue there is new information in the main text, but alas, unsupported by references. Despite such details, this is a very presentable volume, if rather costly.

A consequence of this was that at the close of the century in these remote townships some of the Marwari families of Shekhawati maintained households of greater splendour than ever before. Their taste in ornament and decoration was conservative, uninfluenced by the anglicizing ideal which had affected the Rajput princes and nobility. In the murals of their houses we have a vigorous continuation of the earlier mixed Rajput/Mughal decorative tradition, with images broken in the emphatic distortion of a folk rendering. Motifs from British India are often incorporated (as European motifs were in the earlier tradition), as images of exotic high-life. One of the best of the murals is of an English lady, in a pale blue "classical" gown with shaded folds, standing beside a gramophone with a convoluted trumpet of similar hue; it suggests something one might see in a dream after looking at Pompeian frescoes.

The past decade has seen a shift in taste and attitudes, and the aesthetics of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century are no longer subject to dismissal, ridicule and condemnation. The colour palette of this volume will contribute to the rehabilitation. There is a short, but informative introductory text, which occasionally surrenders to facile judgments and questions; but in general it maintains a high standard of historical exposition and is accompanied by excellent illustrative material.

In the territories of these Rajput princes were their feudatories and non-Rajput servants, hereditary ministers and accountants, who followed the decorative tastes and fashions of their lords as far as resources would permit. The more inaccessible principalities also became bases for long-distance mercantile traders, for whom the ruler's protection, military levy and fortified towns in the desert provided security against degradation. In turn the merchants brought wealth to the rulers of an infertile land. The merchants were generally known as Marwars (after the barren and distant territory of Marwar or Jodhpur); their descendants are often rich and powerful in India today. The ancestral homes of such multi-millionaires as the Bhatias and Dalais are illustrated in the volume.

Shekhawati, a barren area to the north-east of Rajasthan, was divided among quarrelling and belligerent

Merchants' murals

Simon Digby

FRANCIS WACZIARG and AMAN NATH

Rajasthan: The Painted Walls of Shekhawati
110pp. with 93 colour plates. Croom Helm. £11.95.
0 7099 2762 2

In the seventeenth, eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the ancient tradition of mural painting in India attained notable expression in the great palace-fortresses which Hindu Rajput rulers were then building or enlarging. The "protection" of the British was extended over these principalities in the early nineteenth century, but it was only after the "Mutiny" of 1857 that, largely through the education of minor heirs to the principalities and other social contacts with the British, the sons of these houses acquired different tastes and needs in furnishing and decoration.

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Filippo Donini

ALBERTO SAVINIO
Pulchelli raman
Edited by Alessandro Tintinri
442pp. Milan: Adelphi. L18,000.

When Alberto Savinio died, in 1952, the event was deplored rather perfunctorily in a few newspaper articles; the notion that he was a severe loss to Italian art and letters would have been dismissed as an exaggeration. Two years later a retrospective exhibition of his paintings at the Venice Biennale was also disposed of in perfunctory reviews. It was only some twenty-five years after his death that critics began to realize what a good writer Savinio was and to appreciate the importance of his multifarious activity, not only in literature but also in painting and music. The time, finally, was ripe for accepting an artist who was obviously an anomaly in the Italian tradition, being much more closely connected with French and other European avant-garde movements than with any strictly Italian literary or artistic school.

His attitude of detachment and aloofness from such groups, together with his independence from the Italian cultural establishment and irreverence for its exponents, had caused him practically to be ostracized in Italy: Papini excluded him from his famous anthology, Cecchi castigated his eccentricity, Falqui found him sloppy. His disrespect for Fascism put Savinio in a serious predicament: a satirical article of his in *Ombra* caused that paper to be suppressed in 1939 and deprived him of his main source of livelihood. But Fascist persecution turned out in the end to be one of the reasons for his posthumous revival. When, in the 1970s, a reappraisal of the literature of Fascist times was made, and a respected critic, Bindacci, proclaimed Savinio to be, after Pirandello, the greatest Italian writer of this century. Since then his books have been reprinted, his paintings have been shown again, even his music has been performed; a concert in 1978 in the Exhibition Hall at Rome, where a sample of his music was presented in the company of his paintings (some of which were stolen: the ultimate seal of appreciation) marked the climax of Savinio's fama.

Between Papini's neglect and Bindacci's canonization the gulf is wide; and the literary historian of the future will probably condemn both positions as unacceptable. Savinio's supremacy over all Italian writers of this century but Pirandello is, I think, indefensible; but that he was a good and important writer and artist is hardly in doubt. Apollinaire said of him in 1914 that "as a poet, painter, playwright and musician he was like a genius of the Italian Renaissance"; even his music can easily dismiss, as Savinio's poetical production is minimal in quantity and poor in quality, but substitutes for "poet" the more appropriate description of "writer", so as to include both the novelist and the essayist (two aspects of Savinio that Apollinaire in 1914 could not have known), and we have an uncommon and outstanding literary figure.

Savinio's musical studies were serious and thorough. They were started at the Conservatoire of Athens (where he was born of Italian parents in 1891) and continued in Munich with Max Reger. His first aspiration was certainly to become a musician, and in 1906 an opera of his, *Carmen*, was recommended by Mascagni to Ricordi for publication, but Ricordi refused it. In Paris, where Savinio lived from 1911 to 1915, his gifts as a pianist and composer attracted the attention of Stravinsky and Diaghilev, and his ballet, *Persele*, was performed in New York, with Fokina as choreographer. Other ballets followed, which were performed in Rome, but more characteristic are his compositions for voice and piano and voice and chamber ensemble, which for their eccentricity and humour have been compared to the works of Erik Satie.

The artistic fervour of Parisian life at that time was very important in Savinio's formation, yet it is remarkable that, just as his music shows no influence from Debussy, Ravel or Fauré, so his painting owes much more to Böcklin than to any French master. Surrealist he was, but much more as a creator than a follower. According to André Breton, the real founders of Surrealism were Savinio and his brother, Giorgio De Chirico (it was in order to emphasize his difference and independence from his famous brother that he decided to take the pseudonym of Savinio). He was the only Italian to be included in Breton's *Anthology of Black Humour*.

His first literary work, *Hennaphrodito* (1918), is certainly one of the best examples of Italian Surrealism. Written partly in French, and partly in an Italian full of dialect and foreign words, it lacks both linguistic unity and thematic coherence. Its unrelated episodes refer to the author's life in Paris, Ferrara, Bologna and Thessalonika, where he was sent as a member of an Allied expeditionary force in 1917. This last section contains a memorable description of the horrors of war, and ranks with the finest war literature of any country, combining as it does the talent of an objective reporter with the genius of a Surrealist artist.

After the war Savinio settled for eight years in Italy, and acquired a certain reputation, but he also made many enemies, both as a journalist and as a critic. His contributions to *La Ronda*, a journal which aimed at restoring traditional cultural values, were rather half-hearted, but when he became the leading critic of *Valori plastici*, an art magazine, he was able to preach effectively the renovation of Italian art in the light of European avant-garde movements, and to develop his interesting theories on painting and music. It was then that he started his career as an essayist, the form in which he was to excel.

But Paris was too attractive, and Savinio could not be long away from it. So to Paris he returned, remaining there from 1926 to 1934, enjoying the "lightness of the air" and the "fervour of ideas". In what, according to him, was the only possible *habitat* for an artist. It was his enthusiasm for Paris that prompted one of his most amusing lines: "A rumber man who in

Rome clears one metre and a half, in Paris will easily clear two metres". In fact, his Paris years were very productive; a comic opera, several ballets, a play and many short stories, later collected under the title *Tutta la vita*. These stories contain some remarkable surrealist extravaganzas, such as grand pianos giving birth to small planes, a talking amulet which reveals the amorous exploits to which it has been an accomplice, fornication between bureaucrats and their double-entry ledgers, and so on. But the finest fruit of these years are Savinio's delightful short essays on French writers and artists whom he knew personally: Apollinaire, Max Jacob, Proust ("the man of the long sentence and the short thought"), Colette, René Clair and many others.

Savinio's infatuation with France could not endear him to the Fascist authorities, and when he went back to Italy, he was received with a famous epigram: "Non quando li prende, ma quando li rende. Parigi ci offende" (Not when it takes them, but when it returns them, Paris offends us). It was not easy for him to find work as a journalist, until a friend founded *Ombra* and appointed him as its literary critic. But *Ombra*, as we have seen, did not last long, the war caused other papers to be suppressed, and Savinio found himself in difficulties again.

This, however, was a blessing in disguise because, lacking regular employment, he found ample time for creative writing and produced his best books: a novel, *Infanzia di Niviso Dolcennare*, a charming travel-book enlivened by autobiographical and critical digressions, *Dico alle Cio*, a splendid study of Maupassant, and a collection of very short, very brilliant, very enjoyable essays on widely different figures - Nostradamus, Paracelsus, Jules Verne, Böcklin, Stradivari, Verdi, Isadora Duncan, Venturini, Colodi (the author of *Pinochietto*), even the Spanish *torero* Cayetano Benavente, all under the title *Narrate, uomini, la vostra storia*.

Niviso Dolcennare is the novel of the same name, of course, the author himself, Niviso being an anagram of Savinio, and Dolcennare (Sweet sea) an allusion to his Greek origins. Niviso's infancy is in fact set in Athens, and the depletion of the

Greek background is one of the book's charms. Savinio's Greece naturally calls to mind De Chirico's paintings, but owes much also to Böcklin's interpretation of Greek myths. It is curious that Savinio, an Italian born in Greece and with a long experience of France, should have found German art and German thought so congenial. Even his obsession with androgyny, which inspired him to write *Hennaphrodito* and which also occupies much of Niviso's story, as well as some of the tales of *Tragedia dell'infanzia* and many of his paintings, has a precedent in Rilke's aspiration to become "the perfect artist, the androgyne". Just as Savinio's theories owe much to Nietzsche, so some of his paintings are influenced by Max Ernst.

After the fall of Fascism, Savinio resumed his journalism. Literature, music and the theatre were his favourite subjects, but he also dabbled in politics, showing even in this field his outstanding qualities of humour, irony and satire. Nothing was too serious for his wit, and some of his aphorisms have the pungency of Voltaire: "the danger of politics lies in the fact that it is practised by politicians". His political writings were collected and published under the title *Sorte dall'Europa*.

His musical writings too (mainly concert reviews) were collected into a book, *Scatolaccia*, and now it is the turn of his theatre reviews: *Pulchelli romani* contains all the theatre articles which he contributed to the ill-fated *Ombra*. His interest in the theatre was prominently displayed in his literary career both as a creative writer and as a critic. Most of his own plays are modern versions of ancient Greek fables: *Capitano Ullasa*, *Ennio B. vedovo Gloriosa*, *Alcibiade di Samuele*, *Orfeo vedovo*, and their combination of classical themes with contemporary customs may suggest the influence of Giraudoux. But Savinio had no great respect for that author, whose theatre he called "The theatre of the League of Nations"; that his own plays are very different (and certainly less successful), there are much more Surrealist and, here and there, futuristic and Pirandellian. *Alcibiade* is perhaps the best of them; it contains some remarkable anticipations of theatrical inventions

besides Shakespeare appear in *Pulchelli romani*: Terence Rattigan (*French Without Tears*), Maugham (*The Explorer*) and Shaw (*Pygmalion* and *Saint Joan*). I am sorry to report that none of them finds favour with Savinio. Rattigan's play is condemned as "void of movement, almost paralytic". Maugham's comedy is adjudged "silly and banal". Shaw is called "not a writer, but a society game for bourgeois families" and his wit downgraded to a sort of "moralist's wit". This last judgment is surprising, but perhaps it only confirms that dog does not eat dog. Savinio was a wit, and a rival wit too much for him.

of the kind later made popular by Beckett, such as the imprisonment of characters within material constraints, to show their evolution from life, or the magnification of a telephone to gigantic size, to underline the importance of a desire cell. This tendency was also prominent in Savinio's work as an operatic director, an activity that occupied most of his last years and resulted in some memorable performances of Stravinsky's *Firebird* and *Oedipus Rex*, Rossini's *Armida*, and Offenbach's *Tales of Hoffman*.

Unfortunately, his duties as a theatre critic on *Ombra* obliged him to attend, and review, mostly Italian plays of the Fascist years, and foreign works were seldom allowed to appear on the Italian stage. His admirable gifts were consequently frequently wasted on poor plays and indifferent actors. But when he is confronted with the giants of Italian theatre: Goldoni, Alfieri, Pirandello, Eleonora Duse, Edoardo De Filippo, it is a pleasure to find a great critic coming to grips with great authors and actors. His reviews of productions of D'Annunzio - an author then held in rank among the greatest - are a pure delight; how cleverly Savinio debunks the things, the novels of the Swede (and G. Bengtsson (author of *The Long Ships*)) and the Icelandic Halldor Laxness (winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1955).

Geographically, the book's coverage is not quite so wide. It says little of the Vikings in the Frankish Empire, the Mediterranean, or Russia; but it shows them in their original homelands, with Charlotte Blindheim's discussion of the urban communities of Viking Age Scandinavia; and in the British Isles, with Christopher D. Morris's study of the settlement and economy in Dublin, York and elsewhere, and W. F. H. Nicolaisen's review of the place-name evidence for their settlement of Scotland. It also follows them to the Faroes, Iceland, Greenland and North America, with Gwyn Jones's article on "The Vikings and North America" and a sample of Louis A. Fieschmann's forthcoming bibliography of "Norsemen in America".

Archaeology, which supplies most of the material for the articles on art, towns and settlements, also appears in Martin Blindheim's discussion of the gold wares used for show on the bows of Viking ships, and in James Graham-Campbell's introduction to the Viking silver hoards which, with the coins they often contain, are of great importance for dating the various Viking art-styles in relation to each other.

The generally wide perspective of this book makes it easier to understand its inclusion of some articles which might otherwise seem out of place, such as Leslie Webster's discussion of the Franks Casket, an artefact most probably of eighth-century Northumbrian origin and depicting an episode from Germanic legend which is also known from Old Norse literary sources; two articles on Old English in relation to Old Norse literature, one of them (by Joseph Harris) dealing with the Old English poem *Beowulf* and the other (by Thomas D. Hill) with heroic literature (the Old English poem *Völunga saga*); and a long article by the editor, Robert T. Farrell, on *Beowulf* and the Northern Heroic Age. The purpose of these articles is presumably to show that the English were, in a sense, ready for the Vikings by the time their raids began at the end of the eighth century, partly because of the Germanic heritage they shared with them, and partly because of the sustained contact between England and Scandinavia during the four centuries preceding the Viking Age. For this contact Farrell

the eleven volumes of *Anglo-Saxon England* has recently been published (Oxford: Clarendon University Press, £22.50 or \$21.24918 X). Edited by Peter Clemoes, it includes essays on "The cult of murdered royal saints in Anglo-Saxon England" by D. W. R. R. Kennedy, "King Alfred's 'reformation': the Latin sources" by J. A. G. Reaney, "The 'formative' stages of *Beowulf*" by R. T. Farrell, and a bibliography of Anglo-Saxon studies for 1981.

in both literary and artistic terms, Siciliano's authors, whether present here or not, are the same authors as Cecchi, Thibaudet and Wilson devoted themselves to: Flaubert and Proust, Henry James and Thomas Mann, Conrad and T. S. Eliot.

Which belongs, it has to be admitted, to *La Voce di Oletto* offers little that is new. But the debts which Siciliano has contracted towards the "great tradition" of criticism have been reinvested in a "creative work" of persons and texts" which, if at times a bit murky, "need for death" and the "fever" of D. H. Lawrence, "in perpetual flight from himself". The modern artist is a man who does not live but restricts himself to spying on the lives of others, an adolescent who never risks becoming an adult (if maturity, as classical art expresses it, is the capacity to bring into harmony death and life, the shadow and the light) and who from adolescence can only pass: straight to senility - as Adorno put it and as Croce had put it before him, in a phrase recorded here by Siciliano.

The "sources" of this conception of the relation between art and life, if not of the critical approach it leads to, are no less evident in Siciliano for going unannounced. On the jacket of the book the poet Attilio Bertolucci presents *La Voce di Oletto* as a "creative" critic's challenge to, or even his revenge on, the alternatives of academic specialism on the one hand and "militant" criticism on the other (publicity department). This is perhaps going a little far in a cover note. But the allusion to figures such as Emilio Cecchi, Alberici Thibaudet, or Edmund Wilson indicates precisely the critical epoch to which Siciliano's "method" belongs. It is the same epoch

Norsemen rampant

Rory McTurk

L. T. FARRELL (Editor)

The Vikings
300pp. Chichester: Phillimore. £20.
\$30.00/\$36.50

This book - a collection of articles based on lectures given mainly at Cornell University in connection with the Viking Exhibition of 1980-81 - sets the Vikings in the widest possible perspective chronologically, if not geographically. In discussing their origins it goes back to well before their time, with C. P. Wormsld comparing some of the migrating Germans of the fifth and sixth centuries, Rosemary Camp reminding us that Viking art is "not something new" but "part of an interrupted development in Germanic art", and P. H. Sawyer showing how Scandinavian and Baltic trade and piracy led to the adoption of the mast and sail, and so to the Viking raid. The book also brings the Vikings into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, with James L. Barrisbar's discussion of William Morris as a source of the Viking Myth in art, among the things, the novels of the Swede (and G. Bengtsson (author of *The Long Ships*)) and the Icelandic Halldor Laxness (winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1955).

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draws largely on archaeological evidence, particularly the Sutton Hoo ship burial, which gives hints that the dynasty ruling East Angles in the sixth and seventh centuries was of Scandinavian origin.

Though composed in Old English, *Beowulf* has a distinctly Scandinavian bias; all its main characters are Scandinavian, and scholars have been reluctant to date it to after the advent of the Vikings since its generous treatment of Scandinavians would seem unlikely in an England ravaged by Viking attacks. Farrell however concludes that "an interest in Scandinavian affairs among Englishmen (despite the vicious attacks of Viking raiders) was possible at almost any time in the period 400-1100". This leaves open the possibility that *Beowulf* was composed "at almost any time" between c.525 (the date of a historical event referred to in the poem) and c.1025 (the date of its manuscript), a period which takes in much of the Viking Age (793-1066).

Wormsld is the most wide-ranging and incisive contribution to the volume. It gives a good-humoured, well-informed and critical account of Viking studies over the past twenty years (with Sawyer's *Age of the Vikings*, 1962, as its starting-point), and suggests ways which future research might follow. We should not be asking, in the manner of 1066 and All That, whether the Vikings were a good or a bad thing, but our admiration for their achievement should not make us forget their paganism or their nastiness; we should be more inclined to trust than to dismiss the written Scandinavian sources; and we should view the Vikings in a "wider European context". The *Vikings* represents a healthy step forward on this last path in particular.

Reappraising the raiders

Hilda Davidson

P. H. SAWYER

Kings and Vikings: Scandinavia and Europe AD 700-1100
182pp. Methuen. £7.50 (paperback, £3.95).
0 416 74180 0

Every ten years or so, someone attempts to clarify the confusing records of Viking expansion. In an outburst of energy hard to account for (although many have tried), the Vikings criss-crossed much of Europe with their raiding and expeditions, and the Baltic and Irish Sea and the Atlantic Ocean with their excellent ships, so that their movements cover an area from Greenland and Newfoundland to the Caspian Sea. The pioneer history of the Viking movement published in England was that of Thomas Kendrick in 1930, and an admirable book it was. The next outstanding effort, with the same title, was Gwyn Jones's *History of the Vikings* in 1968, an impressive and witty study of Viking culture against the historic background. Here we have a more limited study by P. H. Sawyer, which purports to concentrate on the Viking raids in Europe and the gradual building up of Scandinavian kingdoms in the North. Detailed studies of many areas, and in particular dedicated work by archaeologists on various sites - York, Dublin, Treleburg, Dorset, Starke Ladoga and so on - the long list of which reflects the wide-ranging activities of the Vikings, makes reappraisal up-dating earlier work very necessary.

This is a cautious book, less stimulating than the author's earlier work, *The Age of the Vikings* (1971), when he struck out vigorously at various scholarly assumptions, and emphasized the unreliability of much generally accepted evidence. Now, while still echoing such warnings, he is mainly concerned in gathering scraps of relevant information from recent investigations, such as the growth of markets in the Danelaw, the new view of Trelleburg and other massive Danish fortifications as administrative centres rather than military bases for the invasion of England, or the new dating of the *Danevirke* which divided the Danes from their southern neighbours to the early eighth century. He emphasizes the fact that most of our new knowledge is due to archaeology. This itself can be misleading, of course, and Sawyer admits this plainly when it also shows the unreliability of saga evidence. An instance of this is the story of the chapel in Greenland put up for the wife of Eric the Red; the Icelandic Saga of Eric recorded that it was built a long way from the farm because of her husband's well-known hostility to Christianity, and when the chapel and farm had been excavated this was hailed as an example of archaeology confirming saga tradition. More recently, however, another earlier farm has been discovered close to the chapel, so that it seems that the wrong conclusion from his limited knowledge of the site.

In fact, the author is waging a constant campaign against accepting evidence from sagas, early poetry, myths, folk tradition or the iconography of Viking art. He sets his face sternly against the approach of Gwyn Jones, who had detailed knowledge of the literature and used it freely though critically, or studies such

Teaching the old tongue

T. M. Charles-Edwards

VIVIAN LAW
The Insular Latin Grammars
131pp. Woodbridge: Boydell. £22.
0 85115 147 7

Vivian Law's book surveys Latin grammarians of English or Irish background in the period up to the Carolingian Renaissance. She writes with clarity, learning and good sense; the work will be an indispensable and agreeable aid to anyone concerned with the intellectual history of early medieval Europe.

The Latin grammarians of Late Antiquity wrote for Latin speakers, to teach them how to write and speak standard Latin. It is as if, in the twentieth-century Englishman with the slightest pretensions to be thought educated were obliged to write and, in formal settings, to speak English closely modelled on the prose of Donne or Hobbes. Insular grammarians (namely those native to the British Isles) were in a quite different position: they taught Latin to speakers of Celtic languages or of Old English. Their task might be compared to that of a man attempting to teach a twentieth-century Russian to speak and write a seventeenth-century English. For the Insular grammarians the problem was, therefore, quite different, and thus the old textbooks had to be modified, supplemented or replaced.

Their need was also more urgent. Continental churches might parade the rusticity of their Latin, sometimes with justice. They might even suggest that study of grammar was profane, frivolous or corrupting - unworthy of monk or bishop. But no Englishman, Briton or Irishman could seriously propound such a view: without Latin grammar there could be for them no reading of the Bible let alone of St. Augustine. The condemnation of the grammarians by Gregory the Great might be quoted, but it could not be obeyed. *Liber grammaticus*, as *Donatus* was a not unrepresentative view; but the Donatus was now a Christian too: no

longer did the pupil decline *muza, muza, muza*, but *ecclesia, ecclesia, ecclesia*.

The need for Insular grammars, however, was shortly to be as keenly felt on the Continent as it had been in the British Isles. Until about AD 800, educated speakers of what was fast becoming French appear to have believed that they were speaking Latin - rustic perhaps, but Latin nevertheless. In the ninth century, however, men began to distinguish between *lingua Latina* and *lingua Romana*, namely Old French. They were now prepared to treat Latin as a foreign language and to adopt Insular grammars. By that time, moreover, the centre of gravity of the Frankish dominions had shifted eastwards, from the valleys of the Seine and the Somme towards the Rhineland. Charlemagne was a German speaker; Charlemagne was a German speaker; his dynasty had invested heavily in the conquest of other German peoples to the east; and with Frankish power came Christian missionaries, many of them from England. The linguistic problem first posed to Britons and Irishmen, and then to the English, now faced numerous Germanic speakers on the continent: Franks and Saxons, Thuringians and East Franks.

Almost all of the manuscripts of the works discussed by Dr Law were written on the Continent between 750 and 900. In this period, men studied grammar with the end in mind: to use it in the twelfth century, they devoted to logic. It was not surprising to find great men who were also great writers. The West Saxon Wulfstan, who was to take the name Boniface, to labour as a missionary among Hessians and Thuringians, was appointed archbishop for the German mission-field by the Pope and to die as a martyr in Fria, wrote a grammar, probably while he was still in England. Interestingly, it was too classifying to catch on in spite of considerable intellectual merits. Charlemagne himself collected Latin grammarians and even envisaged a grammar of his own native vernacular.

Insular grammarians, however, felt out of favour in the mid-ninth century. The wider dissemination of the


Dr Law's argument also depend upon the supposition that, after the Synod of Whitby in 664, Irish and English scholars had increasingly little to do with each other. Admittedly, she does try to argue the point, but she appears to be unaware of much of the relevant evidence. To take only one example, the Northumbrian Alcuin, Charlemagne's friend and teacher, had an Irish pupil in Francia and

as Strömbeck's masterly essays on the conversion of Iceland. Sawyer permits himself other types of assumption, and intelligent guesses, since we find statements like: "There is no direct evidence of any connection between the attacks on Dorset and the more extensive raids in the western parts of the British Isles, but it is likely that . . ." and so on. He will cheerfully form conclusions on the complex and highly controversial evidence of the hoards of eastern silver found in Scandinavia and the lands around the Baltic. He rightly points out that the evidence for the cutting of the "blood eagle" on the backs of captive kings by Viking leaders is very dubious, but rather surprisingly, he does not completely rule it out, pointing out that it is, in fact, no more shocking than the drawing and quartering of condemned prisoners in later times. But if one begins to consider evidence of this kind, however cautiously, one needs a more serious appraisal of the reasons which led to the writers of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries at once glorifying the Vikings and their warrior rolligon and emphasizing the more horrific of their exploits, and this must entail relying on the kind of evidence which is avoided throughout this book.

Certainly this is a useful book for students and those desirous to catch up with recent work in the historical and archaeological field, and the latest theories on the trading and settlement patterns and the campaigns of the Vikings. It is less helpful on the early kings, after a promising introduction concerning the development of pirates into respected rulers once they amassed powerful fleets. While limited in scope compared with earlier studies of the Vikings in Europe, it serves as a convenient postscript to them.

corresponded both with Englishmen in Ireland and an Irish scholar in England. If this is the real situation, easy talk of Irish circles as against English circles is exceedingly rash. It is understandable that Law should have wished to pour cold water on some of the more extreme examples of Hibernophilia in this field of scholarship, but she is herself too anxious to apply national labels to early medieval texts to command complete assent.

Nevertheless, even if one does not accept this particular conclusion, her survey of early medieval grammatical learning remains extremely valuable and her demonstration of the Carolingian debt to Insular grammars is unassailable. As for the Irish and the English, it should be remembered (in this period of government-enforced nationalism in higher education) that the first English experience of free education was in Ireland, in the seventh century.



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